



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 4 • MARCH 28 - MAY 2, 2025

PHOTO: MALLORY ROHRIG

## Town Hall Yields Few Answers, Little Clarity on Impact of Trump Policies



The town hall panel on March 6 comprised (from left) City Councilor Ruthzee Louijeune; Monique Tu Nguyen, director of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement; State Sen. Will Brownsberger; Reggie Stewart, representing Councilor Tanya Fernandes Anderson; State Rep. Jay Livingstone; and Councilor Sharon Durkan

BY RUTH KHOWAIS AND STEVE WOLF

What's next under Donald Trump? About 70 people came to the Fenway Community Center for a March 6 town hall meeting on that topic, with more watching remotely. But anyone hoping for clear guidance on how best to resist the disruptive policies of the Trump administration left empty-handed.

The Community Center organized the panel of six state and city officials to respond to the first six weeks of Trump 2.0, with its blizzard of seemingly illegal executive orders, mass firings, and legal threats. The panel comprised State Sen. Will Brownsberger, State Rep. Jay Livingstone, City Councilors Sharon Durkan and Ruthzee Louijeune, and Reggie Stewart representing City Councilor Tanya Fernandes Anderson. Also present was Monique Tu Nguyen, director of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement. Two moderators—Community Center Interns Nina Wolf and Lisa Egan—asked the panelists five questions, then opened the floor to questions from community members.

The moderators focused on Boston's status as a sanctuary city, shifts in federal policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and how Massachusetts will protect access to contraceptive care and reproductive healthcare, including abortion.

Introducing himself, Stewart said, "There's a lot of chaos and uncertainty. What has not changed is our commitment to serve you." Brownsberger stated, "Right now there is so much happening and most people don't know what to do. There are a whole lot of bad things that have already happened and a whole lot more that's going to happen...I and my colleagues are very committed to react, respond, and try to get ahead of the curve."

In terms of ensuring that transgender residents remain safe in Massachusetts, Livingstone argued that "Massachusetts has

worked hard to make sure everyone feels welcome. In the last 10 years we have passed at least three different laws which keep protections in place. The House and Senate also passed data privacy bills designed to restrict the sale of location data from mobile devices, which might be used to track people seeking gender affirming care." Durkan added that, "We've honored a Trans Day of Visibility in the City Council and we're going to do it again this year on March 19. We need to go out of our way to affirm trans people." Durkan said that under Mayor Michelle Wu, City of Boston workers were able to get gender-affirming care.

As far as Boston's role as a sanctuary city for immigrants, Monique Tu Nguyen noted, "The local police don't work with ICE [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement]. The mayor is going to defend that." Durkan added, "We know we live in a city of immigrants and we will do everything we can to make our city safe. The City Council has reaffirmed the Trust Act." (Enacted in 2014, The Boston Trust Act prohibits the Boston Police Department from working with ICE on civil immigration enforcement efforts, although the department does cooperate on criminal matters.)

As to shifts in DEI policy, Stewart said, "Even if the federal government withholds funding, our commitment to values remains the same. Collaboration will help fill in those gaps." Livingstone added, "Diversity and inclusion make us stronger. The policies in Massachusetts are not changing."

Citing the City's Equity and Inclusion Cabinet, Tu Nguyen said, "We're going to double down on how much we work at diversity and inclusion."

Responding to a question from the floor about what people can do to protect the Constitution, Louijeune suggested two options, "One, we have to still believe in our courts. Two, organize." Underscoring the latter point, Brownsberger added, "a few special elections could make a difference."

West Fens resident Leslie Pond asked how much of state spending represents federal funds. "A huge chunk of the budget," Brownsberger replied. "We would be hard pressed to make up the difference if we lost that federal money." Livingstone added, "25 percent of our budget comes from the feds—over \$15 billion dollars and most of it is for MassHealth."

"What can we do as individuals?" came as the final question from the floor. "Believe in the power of the people," said Louijeune. "Be kind to each other," Brownsberger added.

Ruth Khowais and Steve Wolf both live in the West Fens.

## CONCERNS ABOUT HEALTH RISKS OF M.A.T.E.P. POWER PLANT RESURFACE

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Community advocates are targeting Boston's MATEP [Medical Area Total Energy Plant], a gas-fired cogeneration power plant on Brookline Avenue at Francis Street. The controversial facility provides steam, chilled water, and electricity to all the hospitals in the Longwood Medical Area.

Longtime residents will recall the multiyear fight against the plant's construction. First owned by Harvard University, it passed through a succession of for-profit owners and is now operating jointly as Longwood Energy Partners. The plant uses gas- and diesel-fired generators to produce electricity during periods of peak demand.

In March, *Commonwealth Beacon* published an essay by three authors affiliated with Harvard's schools of medicine and public health. They urged a consortium of nonprofits, including several from the LMA, to "clean up their own backyard before trumpeting clean energy efforts elsewhere." The authors raised concerns about both MATEP's proximity to residential neighborhoods and the impact of its emissions on patients and workers in Longwood. They pointed out that the New York Power Authority plans to replace similar "peaker plants" with long-duration batteries by 2035, a cleaner power-supply solution.

A coalition called Massachusetts Clean Peak Coalition has launched a

petition calling for retirement of the plant ([bit.ly/MATEP-petition](https://bit.ly/MATEP-petition)). Local backers include the Boston affiliate of Mothers Out Front. According to the group, MATEP's 10 gas and diesel units put out more than 400,000 tons of CO2-equivalent emissions every year.

Related to the controversy is Boston's BERDO (Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance) Review Board and the compliance process for large buildings. The City requires institutions to file proposed decarbonization plans that the volunteer board then votes to approve. Owners of multiple properties often present a "blended" portfolio that groups older and newer facilities. The BERDO board then discusses overall energy consumption—the portfolio average—and related emissions. Institutions typically invest in remote renewable energy projects to offset their urban emissions.

At the BERDO board's Jan. 13 hearing, John Meservey initially presented Mass General Brigham's compliance plan, but board members unanimously voted to request a second hearing. The hospital is expected to return in April.

Longwood buildings remain dependent on the MATEP plant, and the contract runs through 2051. Board member Hassan Farooq posed the big question at the January meeting of the board: How will MGB reach carbon net zero if the MATEP plant isn't decarbonized?

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

## Tesla Demonstrators Demand Democracy Over Dictatorship



PHOTO: LESLIE POND

BY LESLIE POND

At their best, public demonstrations offer a sense of community for like-minded folks to bring attention to issues and demand change. Energized via megaphones and music, the grassroots Tesla Takedown rallies in front of the Prudential Tesla showroom on March 15 and 22 (shown) fit the bill.

In response to Elon Musk's actions and role in the Trump administration—including making major cuts to jobs, funding, and services—demonstrations have taken place at Tesla showrooms around the world since February. Because Congress had appropriated spending for the programs, many experts consider the cuts unconstitutional. The Tesla Takedown website states that it is "a peaceful protest movement" that is "tanking Tesla's stock price to stop Musk" and "stopping Musk will help save lives and protect our democracy."

Organizers estimated about 350 participants joined on March 15 and 450 on March 22. Participants' signs creatively expressed their concerns about the direction that the federal government has taken. Shua Sanchez

DEMONSTRATORS ON PAGE 4 >

## CIVIC AGENDA

Tue, 4/1  
Red Sox  
Community Meeting

The Red Sox hold their semi-annual neighborhood meeting. Fenway Community Center, 6-8pm. 1282 Boylston (enter from Jersey Street).

FCA Annual Meeting

Because the Fenway Civic Association annual meeting took place the day after we went to press, we couldn't cover it. Look for coverage in our May issue.

# FENSVIEWS

## Facing Hostility, Fenway Health Stands by Its Mission

BY FENWAY HEALTH

For more than five decades, Fenway Health has been a lifeline for the LGBTQIA+ community, people living with HIV, and all who have sought affirming, stigma-free care. Today, our work is just as vital—perhaps even more so. As restrictive laws in many states continue to deny people the healthcare they not only need, but have a right to receive, more individuals than ever will turn to Fenway Health for refuge, support, and care.

“Efforts to roll back existing civil rights protections and restrict the federal government’s ability to address the needs of transgender and intersex people represent an attack on the very values of

### GUEST OPINION

equity, dignity, and justice that Fenway Health has championed for more than 50 years,” said Fenway Health CEO Jordina Shanks. “On a day when many in our community feel uncertainty and fear, we reaffirm our commitment to being a beacon of hope and a refuge for the LGBTQIA+ community.”

“The work ahead is urgent, and we are working in coalition with our partners to stand up against actions that threaten our rights and to ensure everyone has access to care and support.”

At the same time, we must recognize the broader structural inequities that continue to shape health outcomes across the country. “Striking racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes, health insurance coverage, income, wealth, policing, criminal justice involvement, educational opportunity, and other areas persist in our country,” said Adrianna Boulin, Fenway Health’s director of racial equity, social justice & community engagement. “Women’s inequality continues, with under-representation and pay disparities in many professions. People who are both women and racial and ethnic minoritized individuals experience an impact that is compounded by the layers of discrimination that come with holding both identities. Our society has only recently come to explore and acknowledge the inequities that lead to these disparities, taking steps to reduce and eliminate them, such that all Americans have

an opportunity to be healthy and thrive. In the absence of federal leadership in this area, it is essential that health care organizations and other parts of civil society continue to prioritize understanding and addressing racial and ethnic inequities, and gender inequities, to create a fairer society for all.”

We will lead with our values, ensuring that Fenway Health remains a sanctuary for those who need us most. We will stand strong and united, championing policies that promote health equity, equality, and access to care. And we are not just holding our ground—we are expanding. In the face of uncertainty, Fenway Health will not shrink back. We will grow, strengthening our services and our reach to provide high-quality, affirming care to all who rely on us.

Fenway Health is more than a health center—it is a beacon of hope. Across Massachusetts and beyond, we remain unwavering in our commitment to those seeking compassionate, affirming care. Please know, as always, that we are here for you.

We will continue working alongside patients, families, partner organizations, elected officials, and the communities we serve to ensure that shifting political landscapes do not threaten lifesaving care. Our policy team is actively collaborating with local and national LGBTQIA+, HIV/AIDS, and health-equity partners to push back against efforts to undermine LGBTQIA+ health rights, racial equity, and gender-affirming care.

The challenges ahead are real, but so is our resilience. We will not back down. We will not be silent. We will keep fighting for a future where everyone—no matter who they are or where they live—has access to the care they deserve. And in the process, we will grow stronger than ever.

*Fenway Health is a national model in caring for the underserved lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. It has extensive expertise in HIV/AIDS care and has the largest panel of HIV/AIDS patients in New England. Its research division, The Fenway Institute, is a national center in LGBT health research, training and education, and policy and advocacy.*

## Where Are Our Leaders When We Need Them?

BY DOLORES BOOGDANIAN

As dozens of people lingered at the Fenway Community Center after a town hall meeting on March 6, the atmosphere in the room wasn’t much better than what we’ve felt in our kitchens and living rooms as we watch our system of government disintegrate like a building imploding after all the charges are set off—just not in slow motion.

### GUEST OPINION

Whatever the best description might be of Trump and his cronies and minions stomping through the White House and our federal agencies’ offices and files, the Democratic Party’s response (with some notable exceptions) has been like watching someone trying to put out a raging forest fire with a water pistol. Or maybe like someone rolling over to ask if it’s time to get out of bed as the fire races toward the house. (Okay. No more similes.)

Maybe it was unfair to expect local officials to have ready answers about how to respond to the nihilistic wrecking show we’d seen in the first six weeks of the Trump administration. The overtly cruel and racist executive orders; the breathtakingly incompetent cabinet nominees; the amoral business figures firing tens of thousands of workers in the name of “efficiency” while fattening their *own* accounts on multibillion-dollar federal contracts; turning Canada into our enemy and alienating our NATO allies. All this and more have been worse than a Wes Craven horror movie on steroids. (Oops. I’ve tripped into metaphors.)

It is in times like this that we need our elected officials at

### LETTERS

#### Fenway Civic says article in March issue misrepresented its role in beer garden licensing

TO THE EDITOR:

Your article “Skeptical Neighbors Prompt ZBA to Add Limits to License for W. Fens Beer Garden” implies that the Fenway Civic board initially gave the Cisco proposal its unconditional approval. That is not the case, as you can see from the attached letter to the Zoning Board of Appeals, dated February 18, 2025. After meeting multiple times with Cisco and their acoustical engineer to discuss our concerns regarding outdoor musical performances, we requested conditions on the license that the Board ultimately agreed to include in its approval.

FENWAY CIVIC ASSOCIATION BOARD

*Editor’s note: A copy of FCA’s letter to the Zoning Board of Appeals appears on page 7.*

all levels to be leaders. We need to see that they’re ready for the fight and that they know this time will be a no-holds-barred battle. We want to hear that they have a plan to protect residents from destruction of the social safety net, the suppression of free speech, and an immigration-control program using tactics that reek of the Gestapo. No such reassurance came on March 6th beyond references to fighting the administration’s actions in court and acknowledging that it will be a tough budget year if Medicaid funding is cut. (Can you say “understatement?”)

To their credit, six state and city officials, all Democrats, showed up and listened to angry and worried constituents. That’s much more than can be said of Republican senators and representatives who, just two weeks later during a congressional recess, canceled town halls or ghosted *their* constituents at public meetings. Perhaps they’re getting death threats, too. But telling us not to feel estranged, urging us to “get involved,” advising us to join with like-minded people and reach out to others—all good advice—isn’t what we wanted to hear. The title of the meeting was “What’s Next?” and we wanted to hear what *is* next; that is, what is to be *done*.

We’re lucky to live in a city and state with a governor, attorney general and mayor taking strong public stands against a range of Trump policies. Yet it’s only a matter of time before this vindictive president, enabled by a Republican-run Congress, comes gunning for the Commonwealth and its universities, hospitals, immigrants, and gender-nonconforming people. He will cut off federal funding for housing, highway and other public works, and deny federal assistance in the wake of natural disasters. The onslaught will test all of us, and the rapid dismantling of DEI programs by major corporations and universities in response to racist directives and sentiment shows just how quickly capitulation can take hold. So, telling us that we’re not in a constitutional crisis because Trump hasn’t defied a court order “yet” isn’t just playing the ostrich; it’s deepening the sense that our leaders, defenders of the Constitution and our democracy, haven’t started suiting up while the other side has already begun firing its cannons.

We are in a battle for the democratic principles that make us proud to be Americans. We are in a knock-down, bare-knuckle, OK Corral fight, and shots have been fired. We can’t pretend that we’re in a waiting game anymore. FDR’s words “we have nothing to fear but fear itself” ring more clearly than ever, and neither complacency nor capitulation is an option. We need to recognize that the time for overt resistance has arrived, and we want our marching orders. We need leaders to issue them and to stand with us.

*Dolores Boogdian lives in Audubon Circle.*

## 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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The Fenway News is published monthly by the Fenway News Association, Inc., a community-owned corporation dedicated to community journalism. If you’d like to volunteer to write, edit, photograph, distribute, or sell ads, please contact us at

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SUBSCRIPTIONS \$30/YEAR  
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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, May 2.

> DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS <  
The deadline for letters, news items,  
and ads for our next issue is  
Friday, April 25.

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## HELP FENWAY CDC DEMONSTRATE THE NEED FOR RENT CONTROL

BY JOELLA OROZCO

Fenway CDC believes that stable, affordable housing is the foundation of a thriving community. The organization is working in collaboration with the Homes for All Coalition to lift the

increases—while still encouraging development and ensuring that landlords receive fair returns. It includes exemptions for new constructions and small property owners.

Over the past two years, we've worked alongside residents to push for strong rent-control policies. We've held workshops, organized postcard campaigns, and met with legislators to make sure tenant voices are heard. This important work must continue—and you can help!

Share why rent control is important to you using the form at [tinyurl.com/35c56mb9](https://tinyurl.com/35c56mb9). Your input

will help us create data visualizations showing the widespread need for rent control. By sharing your experiences, you'll contribute to creation of a powerful tool that will support change and amplify the voices of residents across our community

Your story can make a real difference in shaping affordable housing policies for all.

For more information about Fenway CDC's rent-control advocacy, please reach out to Leo Ruiz Sanchez at [lruizsanchez@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:lruizsanchez@fenwaycdc.org).

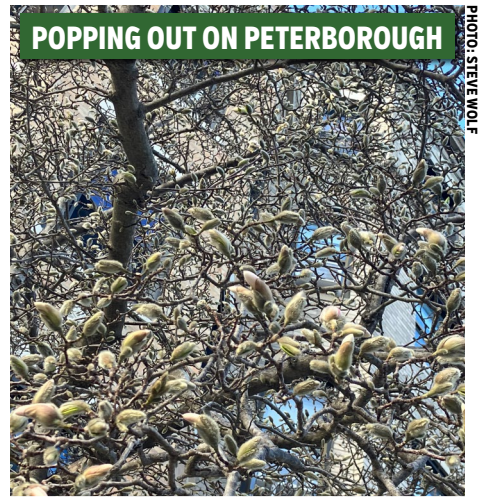
Joella Orozco is the Housing Development and Community Building Co-op at Fenway CDC.

### GUEST OPINION

state ban on rent control and give municipalities the option to enact rent control with tenant protections.

A bill before the legislature (S.1447/H.2328) would protect tenants from sudden, drastic rent

### POPPING OUT ON PETERBOROUGH



The poet was right: April is the cruellest month. Still, a budding magnolia can give even hardened Bostonians hope.

## A Closer Look At The Sculptors Behind The WWII Memorial

BY ED BALLO

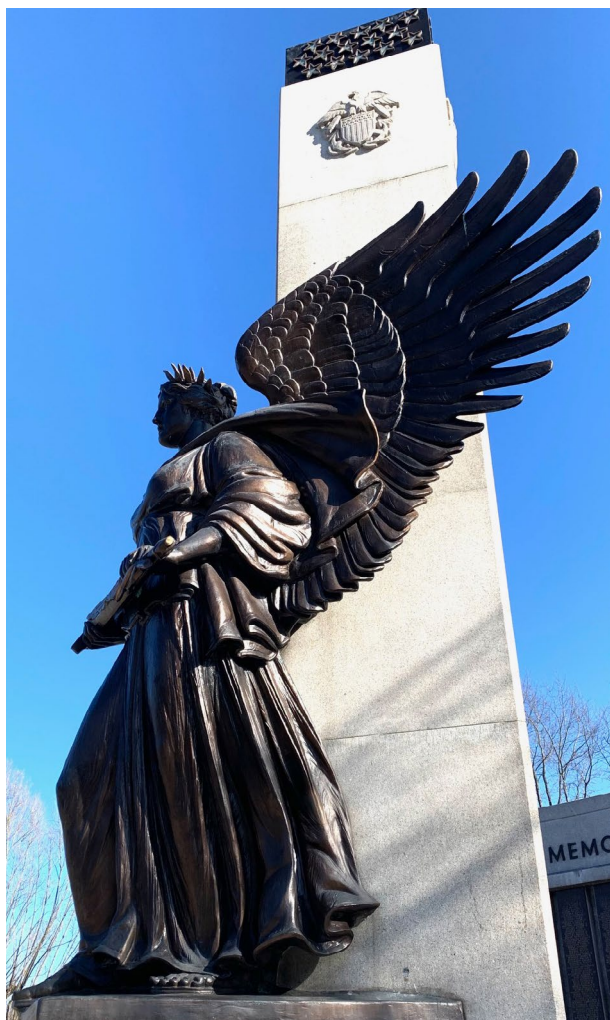
John Francis Paramino (1888-1956) is not a sculptor's name that one hears very often, yet his career was as diverse as it was prolific. Sculptures, tablets, bas-reliefs and commemorative medals were all a part his oeuvre. If you've wandered in the Back Bay Fens, around the Boston Common, or inside the State House, you've seen his work. The Fenway has one of his master works, the World War II Memorial in the Back Bay Fens, which I discuss further on.

The story of John Francis (1888-1956) is intertwined with that of Italian immigration to Boston. His father, Charles, emigrated from Cicagna, a coastal town 16 miles east of Genoa, in 1870.

The 1870s brought the first large wave of Italian immigrants to Boston, an influx attributable to Italian unification in the 1860s, which left in its wake economic and political instability. Over the decades, Italian immigration to Boston was significant; today, more Bostonians claim Italian heritage than any other group but those of Irish heritage. (That includes the Urban Detective, all of whose grandparents arrived from Italy and Sicily during the first decades of the 20th century!)

Born on Christmas 1888, Paramino graduated from the North Bennet Street School (America's first trade school) in the North End and later the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. In time he became a studio assistant to famed sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens and Bela Lyon Pratt (who produced the statues of "Art" and "Science" flanking the BPL's Copley Square entrance). Once fully established, Paramino became a member of both the Boston Society of Sculptors and the Guild of Boston Artists.

In and around the Boston Common, he created the monument to the Marquis de Lafayette and that of Commodore John Barry, both found along Tremont Street near the start of the Freedom Trail. Revolutionary hero Lafayette needs little introduction; Barry, on the other hand, was an Irish-born naval hero during the Revolution whose fame, unfortunately, has been eclipsed by that of John Paul Jones.



John Francis Paramino created the Winged Victory sculpture at the World War II Memorial in the Fens.

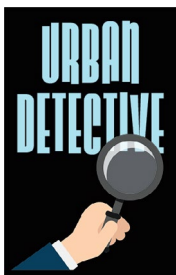
On the Beacon Street side of the Common, Paramino created the Founders Memorial, erected in 1930 for the 300th anniversary of Boston's founding. This monumental bas-relief depicts the arrival of the Puritans in the summer of 1630 and their greeting by the first European settler on the Shawmut Peninsula, the Reverend William Blaxton (also written as Blackstone). Blackstone's face in the memorial is rumored to have been modeled on Boston Mayor John Michael Curley!

The World War II Memorial in the Back Bay Fens, completed in 1949, was financed by a fund established by Boston philanthropist George Robert White. In his will, White established a permanent fund whose income could be used to create "works of public utility and beauty" for the city. At the center of the monument rises the statue of Winged Victory. Behind it, a curved wall holds 27 bronze plaques with the names of 3,000 service members from Boston who died in the war. While Paramino was responsible for the sculpture, Arcangelo Cascieri (1902-1997), another Italian immigrant (from Pescara), was primary architect of the enclosure. He attended the Boston Architectural Club (now Boston Architectural College) and Boston University.

Paramino's Winged Victory is simple and graceful. With her right foot pitched slightly forward and her wings fully outspread, the impression is that of an angel who has just landed—possibly an allusion to the costly victory so recently achieved. This sense of forward momentum invites us to join in this (hopefully) meditative experience. Cascieri's design blends curved walls and reverse curves, all elevated on a plinth with a lectern at the center. The nearly enclosed circle recalls small Greek or Roman amphitheatres, called odeons, found throughout the classical world.

I find it heartening to see how many Boston art institutions helped educate these two fine Italian-American artists. *Bravissimo!*

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



## State Nears Decision On Dana-Farber's Cancer Hospital Proposal

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Dana Farber Cancer Institute's (DFCI) plan for a new hospital advances to the next phase of state review in April. The Public Health Council will review the Health Policy Commission's final report on cost and market impacts in a virtual public hearing at 6pm on April 17. The Council unanimously approved the new project on March 20, but the Determination of Need permit process still requires a 30-day wait following the Health Policy Commission presentation.

The new hospital would represent a major reshuffling of affiliations in the LMA. DFCI will manage the new hospital jointly with Beth Israel Deaconess. Its outpatients now receive care at Brigham & Women's Hospital, a partnership that will end in 2028.

Christopher Philbin, vice president for Government Affairs at Mass General Brigham (MGB), sent more than one letter presenting MGB's concerns to the Department of Public Health's Determination of Need office. He urged the state is to limit the number of beds DFCI can open to the number needed by its Patient Panel, rather than approving more than twice that number. "[A]s currently proposed, the DFCI project is inconsistent with the Commonwealth's cost-containment goals."

Recent media reports noted

that MGB is developing its own cancer institute in a new tower on Cambridge Street near Mass General, but it will occupy two floors of the Hale Building on Fenwood Road and dedicated space at the Faulkner Hospital. The open question is whether current and new patients will migrate from MGB to the new facility at 1 Joslin Place.

Healthcare policy watchdogs Paul Hattis and John McDonough had cautious words for the new hospital in a March essay *CommonWealth Beacon* magazine, saying, "the prospect of a high-cost duopoly in cancer care in the state, with less community cancer care, is a legitimate worry."

For five months, the state's independent Health Policy Commission (HPC) staff studied the projections that Dana Farber has used to justify 300 new inpatient beds and presented a preliminary report to the commissioners in late February. Their concerns included the uncertainty around the demographic modeling used, disruption of current patient care, expected cost increases with outpatient services, and impact on community hospitals. HPC Commission member Alecia McGregor compared the growth in cancer beds to an "arms race." Payments for inpatient cancer treatments are significantly more generous than those for behavioral

health or post-acute care, McGregor explained at a Feb. 27 meeting. Unlike the Public Health Council, the HPC has no authority to deny an applicant's project. However, the Public Health Council must

wait for the Commission's evaluation before issuing its own final approval. The hospital would occupy the site of the Joslin Diabetes Center, and Epsilon Associates submitted an application to the Boston Landmarks Commission in March to tear down the building. The Landmarks staff determined the property's significance did not warrant an Article 85 hearing.

The 1956 building, designed by Shepley Bullfinch Richardson & Abbot, has had several additions, but its most notable feature is an original exterior frieze of pre-cast concrete below first-floor windows. Designed by the prominent sculptor Malvina Hoffman, it depicts the evolution of medicine, beginning with Egypt, India, and China and highlights diabetes treatment. The application says there will be no attempt to salvage it.



Part of an original frieze designed by nationally known sculptor Malvina Hoffman. Joslin does not plan to salvage it.

"The applicant studied the option of saving and reusing the interpretive panels on the west elevation, but concluded it was infeasible, as no space within the proposed building is adequate for such an installation. Additionally the information presented does not reflect the current standards and practices for historical research and interpretation."

For diabetes patients wondering where they'll go next, the Joslin website says that "In early 2025, Joslin's research labs will relocate to 3 Blackfan Street, the Center for Life Sciences. The clinics will move in 2026 to the first and second floors of the Shapiro Building on the East Campus of BIDMC...an internal walkway connects to the Center for Life Sciences, reinforcing our intention to remain a vibrant and cohesive Joslin community."

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

## BLUE BIKE SYSTEM LOOKS TO ADD STATIONS IN THE FENWAY, MISSION HILL

BY ALISON PULTINAS

**B**oston's Active Transportation planners Kim Folks and Louisa Gag teamed for a March 4 community meeting at the Fenway Community Center. They presented Blue Bike user statistics for the Fenway and Mission Hill and answered questions. The Blue Bikes are publicly owned, though they are operated by rideshare company Lyft.

Folks and Gag explained that the system expansion aims to meet current demand and strengthen the network's edges. They referred to the *GoBoston 2030* goal of making sure that every Boston household lives within a 10-minute walk of a Blue Bike station. Mission Hill's topography, however, presents a challenge for a considerable swath of the neighborhood's residential area.

During the meeting, the planners described nine potential new locations in Mission Hill and 20 in the Fenway. In the near term, however, the system will add fewer sites: four in Mission Hill and 6-12 in the Fenway.

Neighbors agreed that adding access around Fenway Park makes sense but some worried that locations immediately adjacent to the Back Bay Fens could encourage cycling on park pathways.

Meeting attendees had varied concerns. Some focused on rider safety. Suggested sites near lawn generated the most controversy. Four racks would require replacing parkland with asphalt, a contradiction of the City's goals for more climate-resilient infrastructure.

City Councilor Sharon Durkan, a cyclist, noted that her district, which covers both neighborhoods, has eight of the city's busiest Blue Bike stations. Successful locations tend to be in commercial areas where there are multiple destinations.

The planners offered comment sheets to fill out and promoted an online survey available through March 31. They did not explain how resident and rider feedback would be incorporated if alternate sites are selected instead of those shown on their maps.

*Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.*

## Working with Fenway Cares, MGB Adds Free Health Services At Community Center

BY GINJER DOHERTY

**P**reventive health services—launched in 2024 to complement free food distributions by the Fenway Cares collaborative—are coming to the West Fens in April.

Services, provided with support from the Mass General Brigham's Community Care van program, will include blood-pressure and A1C blood-sugar monitoring, COVID-19 testing and vaccination, diabetes and hypertension

volunteers distribute more than 10,000 bags of fresh, free produce to neighbors in need each year. The work is supported by state and grant funding and local businesses, institutions, and community organizations.

In 2023, Fenway Cares launched the partnership with Mass General Brigham to provide clients with health-care services at 100 Norway Street in the East Fens. Starting on March 26 at the Fenway Community Center, the health

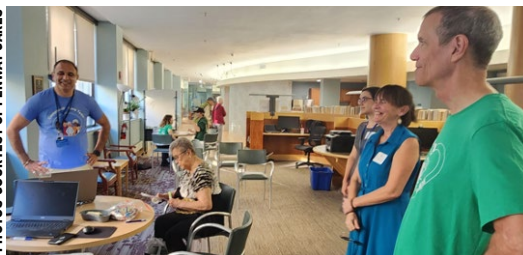
clinic began alternating between the East and West Fens, with a goal to broaden healthcare access and preventive care for Fenway residents. Clinic visits are free to the patient, and services are currently offered in English with Mandarin interpretation. The collaborative intends to evaluate the need for language support in the West Fens and adjust interpretation services as needed.

Fenway Cares distributions take place in the West Fens at the Fenway Community Center (1282 Boylston St., enter next to Blaze Pizza) and the East Fens in Symphony Community Park (39 Edgerly Road). Distribution schedules are posted at [tinyurl.com/y8vs6twb](https://tinyurl.com/y8vs6twb). Learn more about distribution events at [fenwaycommunitycenter.org/food-distribution](https://fenwaycommunitycenter.org/food-distribution).

If you're interested in volunteering with Fenway Cares—new volunteers are always welcome and appreciated—please reach out to [FenwayCares@fenwaycommunitycenter.org](mailto:FenwayCares@fenwaycommunitycenter.org), leave a message at (617) 446-3949, or fill out the form at [tinyurl.com/25tx4kdr](https://tinyurl.com/25tx4kdr).

*Ginjer Doherty is the spring intern for Fenway Cares.*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FENWAY CARES



**A Mass General Brigham clinic at Morville House, next to Symphony Park in the East Fens.**

management, as well as resource referrals, delivered by clinicians and supported by interpreters.

Fenway Cares is a collaboration of Fenway organizations (Audubon Circle Neighborhood Association, Fenway Alliance, Fenway Civic Association, Fenway Community Center, Fenway Community Development Corporation, and Operation P.E.A.C.E./Peterborough Senior Center) that had a shared goal to provide assistance to residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. The coalition's work continues in its sixth year with these expanded services. Fenway Cares' free fresh produce distributions coupled with a mobile preventive health clinic hosted by Mass General Brigham take place biweekly. The collaborative and its

> DEMONSTRATORS FROM PAGE 1

led most of the chants, and the Boston Area Brigade of Activist Musicians kept a festive energy flowing.

Among the many chants were classics such as "This is what democracy looks like!" and one adapted from a 2016 chant by the band Green Day: "No Elon, no KKK, no fascist USA!"

Several Teslas passed along Boylston St. during the rallies; each time, participants called out, "Sell your Tesla!" Many other drivers honked in solidarity, eliciting cheers from the crowd, and on March 15 riders on a passing party bus shouted their support.

One protester, who wished to remain anonymous, said that twice during the March 22 rally, counter-protestors "got in the faces" of some demonstrators and took close-up photos, even pushing aside the sign that the protestor was holding in front of their face.

Upcoming demonstrations posted on the Tesla Takedown website include a Global Day of Protest on March 29. Tesla's stock price has declined nearly 25 percent in the past month.

*Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.*

## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLINES

### City Avoids \$100k Shortfall in Cultural Council Grants

The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture recently sent out award letters for the Boston Cultural Council's 2025 grants. An official press release will come later this spring after the City and the recipients sign grant agreements. The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture awarded 100 grants, most for under \$10,000. As part of the scoring system used by the reviewers, organizations with the smallest budgets received higher amounts.

A dramatic change that could have affected Fenway-related groups was the last-minute withdrawal, at the administration's request, of a \$100,000 contribution by the Red Sox Foundation. However, the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture expects to fill the gap with funds from its own budget, using salary savings from vacant positions. The controversy over the Foundation funds went public at a March 19 City Council hearing, when a memo from the mayor to accept \$350,000 from the Foundation was shot down after a heated discussion. It now goes to the Committee on Government Operations chaired by Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata.

### False Alarm on Oil Spill at Leverett Pond

The website Universal Hub reports that its speculation about a new oil spill at Leverett Pond in late February was incorrect. Instead, emergency vehicles and personnel gathered at the pond—site of a December spill that gunked up more than three-dozen waterfowl in the Muddy River—had converged on the site for a scheduled inspection.

### Arts Academy Student Wins August Wilson Competition

The Huntington Theatre hosted the Boston regional finals for August Wilson New Voices (formerly the August Wilson Monologue Competition) on March 24. Eight high school students took part—four from the Boston Arts Academy, one from John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science, two from Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, and one from Burncoat High School in Worcester.

The usually joyous event had a bittersweet flavor for the Huntington's Education Department, as it was the last time the competition would take place in Boston. The annual event has traditionally included teens from New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles and, especially, Pittsburgh and Boston. According to Director of Education Meg O'Brien, the Huntington received special permission to move forward with the regionals this year. Naheem Garcia served as master of ceremonies, and the three winners will perform at the Huntington's August Wilson birthday celebration on April 27. The grand prize went to Nogolela Kamanampata, a Boston Arts Academy freshman who performed the voice of Rose from *Fences*, a play from Wilson's "Pittsburgh Cycle" set in the late 1950s. The audience included fellow students, alums of previous competitions, teachers, coaches, Huntington staff and the public. The Education Department will continue artistic residencies with several local schools and also promotes the Next Narrative Monologue Competition for high school students with the True Colors Theater Company.

### What's Your Take on the (Kind-of) New Edgerly Plaza

Now that we've had several months to use the new pedestrian plaza in front of Whole Foods in the East Fens, the Boston Transportation Department wants to know how you feel about it and hear ideas you might have for making it better. Learn more and take a five-minute survey at [boston.gov/departments/transportation/project/new-edgerly-plaza](https://boston.gov/departments/transportation/project/new-edgerly-plaza).

### More Fun Than Taxes: Get Haiku Contest Entries in by April 15

Kaji Aso Studio has announced dates for its annual and much-loved Haiku contest. Submit as many entries—either haiku or senryu—as you like by April 15, along with an entry fee of \$3 per entry. Send submissions to [admin2@kajiasostudio.com](mailto:admin2@kajiasostudio.com) (use the PayPal button on the website at [tinyurl.com/bdcmysb](https://tinyurl.com/bdcmysb)) or mail them (with a check corresponding to the number of submissions) to Kaji Aso Studio Haiku Contest, 40 St. Stephen Street, Boston 02115. All entries must be unpublished and not currently submitted to another contest or journal. Be sure to check the website for other requirements for your entry (and to see what you might win).

### Registration Opens for Neighborhood Nines Tickets

The Boston Red Sox Neighborhood Nines program—open to residents of the Fenway, Kenmore Square, and Audubon Circle—gives each qualified registrant a code that opens the door to \$9 tickets for home games. Buy up to four tickets per game for up to five non-playoff games during the season. Register at [mlb.com/redsox/tickets/specials/neighborhood9s](https://mlb.com/redsox/tickets/specials/neighborhood9s).

SOX BOX		This month's home games at Fenway Park	
FRI, 4/4 2:10PM	SAT, 4/5 4:10PM	SUN, 4/6 7:10PM	MON, 4/7 6:45PM
TUE, 4/8 6:45PM	WED, 4/9 6:45PM	THU, 4/10 4:10PM	FRI, 4/18 7:10PM
SAT, 4/19 4:10PM	SUN, 4/20 1:35PM	MON, 4/21 11:10AM	TUE, 4/22 6:45PM
	WED, 4/23 6:45PM	THU, 4/24 1:35PM	

# THE BATTLE FOR BOSTON

HOW MAYOR RAY FLYNN AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS FOUGHT RACISM AND DOWNTOWN POWER BROKERS



**A NEW BOOK BY DON GILLIS\***  
FOREWORD BY FORMER NYC MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO.  
In *'The Battle For Boston,'* former Fenway News reporter Don Gillis examines politics, power, and racial and economic equality in a progressive city.  
Learn more or get your copy at [BattleForBoston.com](https://BattleForBoston.com).

# The Arts

## Of Course These Musical Heavy Hitters Live In The Fenway!

BY MARY ANN BROGAN

The Fenway is known as the cultural center of Boston. With three schools of music, major museums, and a nationally known repertory theater, it attracts artists and arts lovers. With this profile, the Fenway News begins an occasional series highlighting the artistic talents and practices of residents and neighbors.

From the artist who lives next door to the violinist who holds concerts for neighbors, the Fenway is rich in talented neighbors. Larry Thomas Bell, composer and pianist, and Andrea Olmstead, musicologist and historian of American music, are one such talented couple. They've called the Fenway home for more than 40 years. They hail from different parts of the country; music was the common thread that brought them together.

Bell was born in Wilson, N.C. While he was an only child, he had 24 aunts and uncles—although none showed a special interest in music. As a young child, he would play something back on his toy piano that he heard on TV or the radio. This prompted his parents to encourage his interest in learning music. He began piano lessons at age seven and started composing at 15. He also played in a rock band during these teenage years.

At East Carolina University he studied viola and later, at Appalachian State University, he studied with composer Gregory Kostek. After completing his bachelor of music degree, he attended The Juilliard School, earning a master's and doctorate of music. While at Juilliard, he studied composition with Vincent Persichetti and Roger Sessions. From them, he learned to be a "cultured musician." He also studied ear training with Renée Longy, whose father had founded of the Longy School of Music in Cambridge. Later he taught at Juilliard's Pre-College program. A Guggenheim Fellowship and a Rome Prize grant helped him continue writing music in Rome.

Bell has taught composition at all three music schools here in Boston.



East Fens residents Larry Thomas Bell and Andrea Olmstead.

this that she embarked on the study of the history of music. She was drawn by the idea of getting to know what inspired composers and how cultural influences shaped their music. Metaphorically, one could think of the study of music history and structure as a table setting that provides the

PHOTO: MARY ANN BROGAN

Since 2007, he has taught at Berklee College and performs as a pianist throughout the country and world. His music spans vocal, instrumental, orchestral, band, and keyboard. Of special note is his two-act opera, *Holy Ghosts*, which premiered in 2009 at Berklee. Based on Romulus Linney's play of the same name and scored for a rock band, it incorporates nine hymn tunes inspired by Bell's Carolina Pentecostal Holiness background. This was a collaboration between the couple, with music by Bell and libretto by Olmstead. To date, Bell has written more than 200 works of music and is now finishing his fourth symphony.

Andrea Olmstead grew up in Grand Forks, N.D. Her father was a medical doctor and her mother, a French teacher. As a child, she recalls a love of reading books and studying violin. She moved to New York to study violin with Burton Kaplan and played in the New York Youth Symphony and the National Orchestral Association.

She then studied with Lea Foli at the Aspen Music Festival. It was after

heart and soul of the music which then becomes the bounty. She recalls a lunch she had with Roger Sessions after which she was determined to write a book about him—she went on to write four books over six years and has become the leading authority on this modernist composer.

Her teaching career took her to Juilliard, where she met Bell. She has also taught at Aspen Music School, Boston Conservatory, New England Conservatory, and UMass-Amherst.

Olmstead has a long and prestigious list of publications, including seven books and publications in music

journals. She has given preconcert lectures and was the Christopher Hogwood Research fellow at the Handel & Haydn Society from 2005 to 2007. Other honors include three awards from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the 2019 ASCAP-Deems Award for outstanding musical biography, awarded for her book on composer Vincent Persichetti. She is well-known for her book *Juilliard: A History*. Her historical papers are held by the New York Public Library.

Bell and Olmstead cherish the Fenway and appreciate the easy access it gives them to other musical and artistic minds. When asked what attracted them to Boston and the Fenway, both agree it is the nourishing camaraderie that is easily accessible here. The Fenway truly opens its doors to all those who love the arts and music.

Olmstead recommends the websites of the neighborhood's three conservatories, which offer a wealth of free concerts and other performance almost daily in the East Fens.

- **NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY** [Gainsborough at St. Botolph streets] offers concerts, mostly free: [necmusic.edu/on-campus/performance-events/#calendar](http://necmusic.edu/on-campus/performance-events/#calendar)
- **BOSTON CONSERVATORY** offers concerts, theater, and dance programs, mostly free, at 8 The Fenway and 31 Hemenway Street: [bostonconservatory.berklee.edu/events](http://bostonconservatory.berklee.edu/events)
- **BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC** (various locations on Boylston St. and Mass. Ave.) offers concerts, mostly free: [berklee.edu/events/performance](http://berklee.edu/events/performance)

Mary Ann Brogan lives in the East Fens.

### ARTS ACADEMY STAGES 'PIPPIN'



PHOTO: RUTH KHOUAIS

17-year-old Isaiah Riffe (pictured) played the title role in the Boston Arts Academy's production of "Pippin," which ran from March 20 to 22.

## LAST CALL

- **The Sun Will Set: Contemporary Abstraction and the Body** ENDS APRIL 5  
Museum of Fine Arts
- **Future Fossils** ENDS APRIL 13  
20 unsettling works imagine how

- our love of consumption and waste might look like to a future culture.  
MassArt Art Museum
- **Fragments Of Self: SMFA At Tufts Juried Student Exhibition** ENDS APRIL 27  
Museum of Fine Arts



## FENWAY CDC'S ANNUAL MEETING & COMMUNITY VISION CONVERSATION

RSVP for Fenway Community Development Corporation's 52nd Annual Meeting & the 2nd Community Vision Conversation. Doors open at 5:45pm and the program starts at 6:30pm!

We will recognize our Community Service awardees, highlight Fenway CDC's work throughout 2024, and host our 2nd Community Vision Conversation to foster more community input. A light dinner will be provided!



TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2025



5:45 PM - 8:00 PM



300 THE FENWAY

Linda K. Paresky Conference Center  
Simmons University



- FREE, but registration is required at [tiny.cc/FenwayCDC52](http://tiny.cc/FenwayCDC52), or scan the QR code
- Interpretation services available upon request
- Questions? Contact [membership@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:membership@fenwaycdc.org) or call (617) 267-4637 x10



Fenway Community Development Corporation  
Improving Lives and Building Community



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

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

Construction of a new Madison Park High School, the city's only vocational facility, would double its enrollment, add grades 7 and 8, and deliver a 500,000-square-foot complex. The sticking point? The plan's \$700 million price tag would make it the most expensive civic building project in Boston history, according to the *Globe*. The Boston School Committee argues that renovating the existing 1970s-era complex would cost roughly as much as building a new school. It has recommended that the City submit a request to the Massachusetts School Building Authority for the full cost of the project. The City Council will vote on approving a submittal in April.



➡ **South Boston's Shy Bird opened its third branch last month at 201 Brookline Ave., boasting a rotisserie-chicken-focused menu for dining in or takeout.** ➡ The FCDC's Nick Pittman will begin a new job this month as an affordable-housing lender at the Boston office of LISC. ➡

The *Globe* reported that BU faculty member Joan Donovan played a pivotal role in organizing one of the first Tesla-showroom protests in the U.S. (at the Prudential Center on Feb. 15). It inspired filmmaker Alex Winter to create TeslaTakedown.com, which lists more than 170 U.S. demonstrations for March 29, roughly double the listings posted just two weeks previously. ➡ But wait! There's more Musk-related news from our corner of the world. A *New York* magazine package of articles examining "Trump's Purge of Washington" included a profile of the 19-year-old DOGE programmer who famously called himself "Big Balls." Real name: Edward Coristine, who left his freshman year at Northeastern to join "super-high-IQ small-government revolutionaries willing to work 80+ hours per week" on the DOGE team. ➡ In yet further Trump-related news, The Theater Offensive joined several other arts groups that, with the support of the ACLU, have sued the National Endowment for the Arts over its demand that they renounce "gender ideology." A *Globe* article says that the NEA backed off a certification requirement within 24 hours, but the suit has moved forward because the funder has introduced a range of restrictions meant to eliminate grants for any project that addresses gender and racism. TTO Executive Director Giselle Byrd vowed that "Censorship and erasure will not ever prevail." The Theater Offensive, which works with LGBTQI+ youth, has been planning to build a performance space in The Bon apartment building in the West Fens. A storefront there heralds the group's arrival, but it has remained papered over since the building opened in late 2023. ➡

## ENC PRUNES 900 TREES IN THE FENS

PHOTO: RUTH KHOWAIS



On March 20, Jack Schleifer of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy led a group of tree lovers on a 45-minute walk around the West Fens. Their goal: to observe some of the 900 trees being pruned this spring under the ENC's seven-year rolling schedule of tree care across all 1,100 acres of the Emerald Necklace. Bartlett Tree Services carried out the work for the ENC. Last year arborists working for the City inventoried 2,400 trees in the Fens and found that 935 needed pruning for tree health and visitor safety.

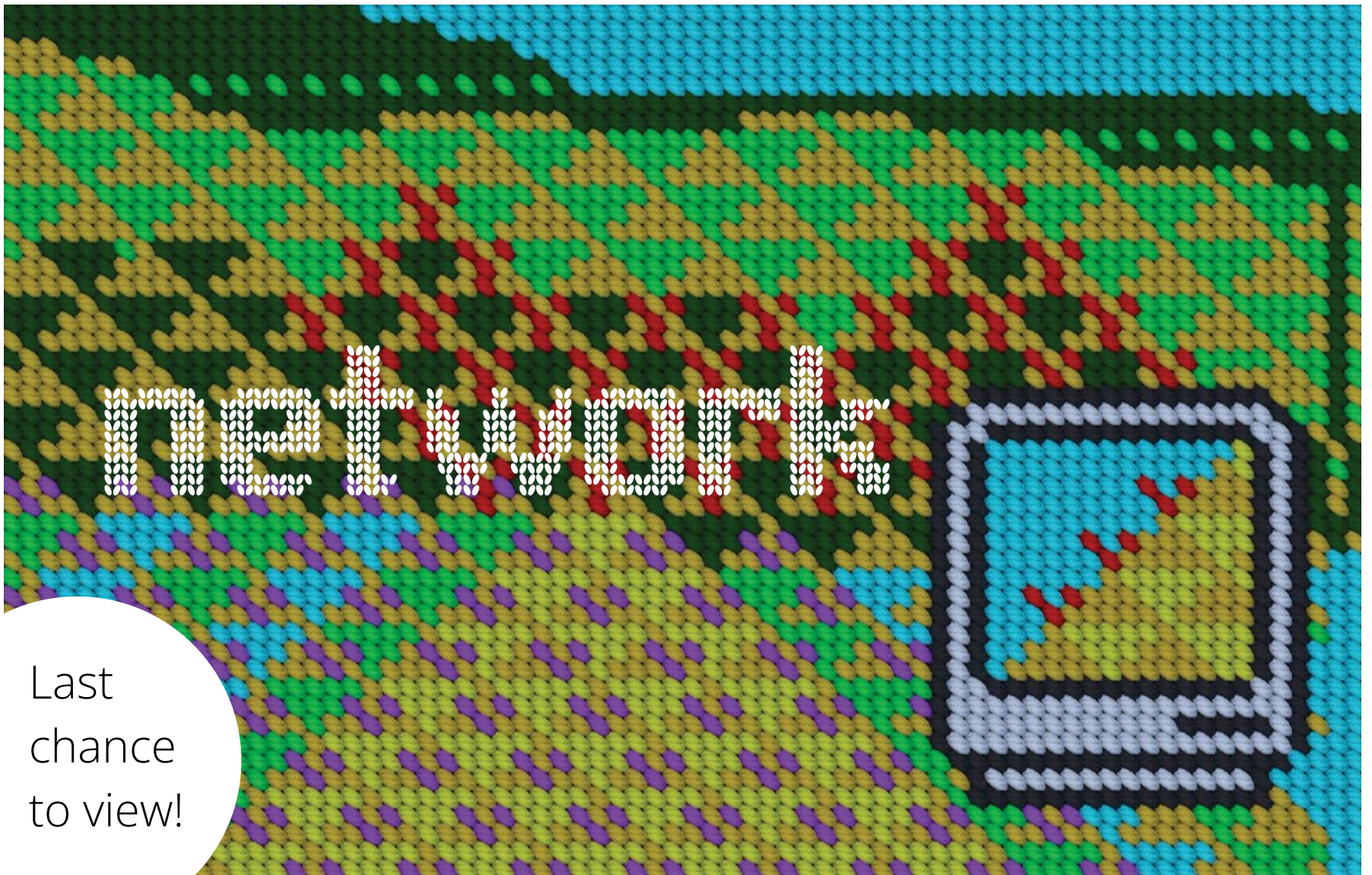
## SENIOR EVENTS

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

- Wed, April 2 & 9 at 12pm: ORAL HISTORY with Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly and Northeastern Students
- Wed, April 2, 9, 16, & 23 at 1pm: TECH CAFE with Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly
- Thu, April 3 at 12pm: 55 BUS STORIES

with Jamie Culberston

- Thu, April 10 at 12pm: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY—WHY IS IT A BIG DEAL? with Maria Tumang
- Tue, April 15 at 11:30am: CHAIR YOGA with Isabella Ravencroft
- Thu, April 17 from 12pm to 2pm: CHAIR MASSAGE
- Tue, April 22 at 12pm: SPRING COLLAGE with Sam Greene
- Wed, April 30 at 12pm: THANK YOU LUNCHEON for interns and volunteers



Last chance to view!



CAT MAZZA  
NOVEMBER 14, 2024 - APRIL 12, 2025  
GALLERY 360 & NU CROSSING

Northeastern University  
College of Arts, Media and Design



Northeastern University  
City and Community Engagement

# Bill Would Make Big Oil Pay For Climate Adaptation, Resilience Work



PHOTO: LESLIE POND

sachusetts [for one year]...Exxon Mobil, \$56 billion [in profits]...and they forecasted how climate change would cause global temperatures to rise, as long ago as the '70s." Lewis observed that New York and Vermont have passed similar bills, and the bill is important for Massachusetts because "federal funding to fight climate change is not going to be coming."

**At left, Tristan Thomas, Policy Director at Alternatives for Community and Environment in Roxbury, speaks to attendees at the Polluters Pay Launch Party.**

In making a case for the bill, Thomas cited the more than two decades' difference in life expectancy between the Roxbury neighborhood of Nubian Square (68 years) and parts of the Back Bay (92 years). "Bad air quality and asthma are rampant in Roxbury..Our air is heavy with injustice," said Thomas.

In December 2023, the Boston City Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting an earlier version of the bill.

To learn more about the Polluters Pay bill S.588 / H1014, visit [polluterspayma.org](http://polluterspayma.org) and [malegislature.gov/Bills](http://malegislature.gov/Bills).

Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.

BY LESLIE POND

A bill to establish a state-level climate superfund, modeled on superfunds that have been established to clean up toxic waste sites, is making its way through the Massachusetts legislature. Revenue for the fund—estimated at billions of dollars over 25 years—would come from the profits of the largest fossil fuel companies, based on their historic emissions, and support climate change adaptation and resilience projects.

In support of the bill, the Polluters Pay Coalition held a campaign launch party on March 16 at Arlington Street Church in the Back Bay.

In introductory remarks to nearly 100 attendees, Dan Zackin, legislative manager with 350 Mass and co-lead of the campaign, highlighted the connection between climate activism and other major issues: "To be an activist in our country is to take on approaching danger, from ICE and other white supremacists to fires and floods...this campaign directly takes on the oligarchs that

are burning our future for a quick buck."

Speakers included Iselle Barrios, a college student representing the Massachusetts Youth Climate Coalition; State Reps. Steven Owens and Jack Patrick Lewis, lead sponsors of the House bill; and Tristan Thomas, Policy Director at Alternatives for Community and Environment, an environmental-justice nonprofit based in Roxbury. State Sen. Jamie Eldridge, also a lead sponsor, did not attend due to a scheduling conflict.

Barrios shared: "Like many people my age, I grew up with the idea of the carbon footprint, or the emissions my individual actions were responsible for... [But] the idea of a carbon footprint was created by the big oil companies, meant to make us think that climate change was our fault, not theirs.... Big emitters bear so much of the responsibility for this problem."

Owens emphasized the underlying principle of Polluters Pay: "Those who make the mess should clean it up." He noted that Shell Oil's profits "doubled in 2022 to \$42 billion, which is just shy of [what] it takes to run Mas-

## JUMPING FOR JOY—AND HOLI



PHOTO: LESLIE POND

Six friends, all Northeastern students, joyfully celebrated Holi for about 15 minutes on March 14 in the Back Bay Fens along Agassiz Road. The sextet—from left, Beverly C., Ayesha T., Em K., John A., MacKenzie B., and Maaya M.—assured a park ranger who stopped by that the colored powders, a typical way to observe the holiday, are non-toxic. Also known as the Festival of Colors, Holi is a major Hindu festival associated with popular legends and a celebration of the arrival of spring; the festival takes place on and around the day of the full moon between the end of February and middle of March.

## AT STATE OF THE CITY, WU CITES RECORD, TROLLS TRUMP: 'WE WERE BORN FACING BULLIES'

PHOTO: LESLIE POND

As firefighters negotiate a new contract with the city, some union members held a standoff at MGM Music Hall, where Wu gave her State of the City speech.

Mayor Michelle Wu gave her third State of the City address at MGM Music Hall in the Fenway on March 19.

Before Wu's speech, about 25 supporters of Firefighters Local 718 held a standoff on Ipswich Street across from the music hall. Banners called for "Contract Now for Boston Firefighters" and "Respect for Boston's Firefighters."

Wu started her speech by

thanking partners, City workers, her family, and the people of Boston for their work and support. She highlighted her administration's accomplishments, including decreased gun violence, more affordable housing units, and improvements at Boston public schools, and announced several new initiatives, including a business recruitment office to fill office vacancies, an energy-saver program

to help upgrade homes and lower energy bills, and expansion of the Family Days program that gives Boston children free access to cultural institutions, among others.

Following on from her congressional testimony on March 5, she stated over the course of her speech: "No one tells Boston how to take care of our own. Not kings, and not presidents who think they are kings. Boston was born facing down

bullies.... We were built on the values this federal administration seeks to tear down.... It's the version of America that belongs not to kings but to kin, where workers have dignity, and science is real.... Boston is not a city that tolerates tyranny. We are the city that leads in the storm; that stands up under pressure, together; and finds strength in each other. We will defend the people we love with all that we've got." —LESLIE POND

## Text of the Fenway Civic Association's letter to the ZBA Supporting Cisco Beergarden Proposal

Editor's note: Please also read the letter on page 2 from the FCA board.

Fenway Civic Association (FCA) is the neighborhood's oldest and only all-volunteer community organization that accepts no public or developer funds. Founded in 1961, our mission is to promote a safe and vital neighborhood that serves the interest of its residents.

FCA met multiple times with the applicants and proposed operators and are supportive of their requests for zoning relief. We would like to specify that our support for live entertainment use on the exterior of the brewery is due to the special circumstances and assurances of this operator, and ask that relief be granted to this operator only, for the following reasons:

1. The north side of Boylston Street was in-

tended for non-entertainment use under Fenway zoning as a way to protect the residential neighborhood and intended development for south Boylston Street, where ground floor retail use and upper floor residential development was planned and built.

- The Cisco team worked concertedly with their sound engineers to design a system that directed sound to patrons and away from residents. The resulting floor plan and infrastructure of their operation is specifically modeled to limit sound, with specialists who will be available for any needed modification.
- The applicant has committed to principles that protect the community, including the programming of the space with acoustic performances and low-volume

recorded music, implementing reasonable cut offs for performance times, and responsiveness to and availability for community input for sound control.

Because we feel strongly about precedence while also believing this applicant has created a program where their use will not cause harm, we ask relief for this request to reflect the unique conditions this applicant has created. We ask the Board of Appeal to include a proviso that such relief be granted to this petitioner at this location only; barring this, similar to the ways in which non-accessory parking (a forbidden use under Article 66), has been granted relief subject to review and renewal, that time-limited relief with future review be required. As a last option, we would request that any change of use or operator

with zoning relief require new applicants at this address to come before the community and the Board of Appeal.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Tim Horn, President  
Fenway Civic Association

**STREET-SWEEPING SEASON STARTS APRIL 1.**

Don't forget to check BOTH the City of Boston and DCR schedules.

BOSTON SCHEDULE  
[tinyurl.com/36ysbpav](http://tinyurl.com/36ysbpav)

DCR SCHEDULE  
[tinyurl.com/yckzcnjw](http://tinyurl.com/yckzcnjw)

# April

## CALENDAR

### Ongoing

Get a head-start on celebrating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution at Mass. Historical Society's just-opened exhibit, **1775: REBELS, RIGHTS & REVOLUTION**. Letters, diaries, and artifacts from the collection shed light on the political and cultural tensions that built in the years leading up to 1775. Mon, Wed-Fri, 10am-4:45pm; Thu, 10am-7pm; Sat, 10am-3pm. 1154 Boylston Street. **FREE**

### Now → Sun, 9/7

Boston's Brahmin collectors didn't warm to Vincent Van Gogh the way they did to his contemporaries, the Impressionists. Nevertheless, he's art-world royalty now, and the MFA's new **VAN GOGH: THE ROULIN FAMILY PORTRAITS** is bound to pack in the crowds. If you can, plan to visit at a quieter time, like early mornings, weekday afternoons or Thu-Fri night. Sat-Mon & Wed, 10am-5pm; Thu-Fri, 10am-10pm. Timed-entry tickets required. \$34 (18 and older)/\$17 (7-17); general admission to the museum included. Buy at the museum or at [mfa.org](http://mfa.org).

### Fri, 3/28 & Sun, 3/30

Handel+Haydn presents **HAYDN'S 'THE SEASONS' AND BEETHOVEN'S MASS IN C MAJOR**. Why go? H+H promises that "harmonies [will] burst through the Symphony Hall air like daffodils through the snow." Sounds good to us! At Symphony Hall Fri, 7:30pm and Sun, 3pm. Tickets \$15-115. Details and tickets at [handelandhaydn.org](http://handelandhaydn.org).

### Sun, 3/30 → Sun, 5/4

The City of Boston and Fenway Civic Association bring spring activation to

## @ THE CENTER

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

- Thu, April 3, 6pm: **FENWAY COMMUNITY CENTER'S ANNUAL MEETING**
- Mon, April 7 & 14, 3pm to 4:30pm: **COMMUNITY WRITING WITH BOSTON UNIVERSITY**
- Tue, April 8, 2pm to 4:30pm: **FREE MARKET WITH THE FENWAY CDC**

the New Ederly Plaza with music, arts, community and fun. All events take place at 1pm. Note: These events will take place weather permitting. The series is supported by a Berklee Fenway Neighborhood Improvement Grant. **FREE**

### Thu, 4/3 & 4/10

**VITA FREE TAX PREPARATION** offers drop-off and remote tax assistance for individuals with a household income of \$70,000 or less. 10am-7pm. Central Library in Copley Square. Learn more at [bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6728f57f54a602ae2c37d1a2](http://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6728f57f54a602ae2c37d1a2).

## COMMUNITY meetings

**MON, MARCH 31** The Boston Planning Department hosts a virtual public meeting on the **1 JOSLIN PLACE HOSPITAL**. The meeting will consider the overall Institutional Master Plan and potential project impacts. A presentation will be followed by questions and comments from the public. This meeting was originally scheduled for March 24. 6pm. Register at [bosplans.org/1JoslinPublic](http://bosplans.org/1JoslinPublic). Email Tyler Ross at [tyler.c.ross@boston.gov](mailto:tyler.c.ross@boston.gov) with any questions.

**TUE, APRIL 1** The Red Sox host their **SEMIANNUAL NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING**. 6-8pm at the Fenway Community Center, 1282 Boylston St.

**THU, APRIL 3** The Fenway Community Center hosts its first annual meeting, 6-8pm. Celebrate the Center's accomplishments from 2024 and learn how you can help it thrive in 2025. Register at [eventbrite.com/e/fenway-community-centers-annual-meeting-tickets-1286573208099](http://eventbrite.com/e/fenway-community-centers-annual-meeting-tickets-1286573208099).

**SAT, APRIL 5** The Boston Ward 5 Democratic Committee hosts the **WARD 5 DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS** to elect delegates and alternates to the 2025 state Democratic convention, which takes place Saturday, Sept. 13. Old South Church, 645 Boylston St. Doors open 8:30am; caucus starts at 9am. You must register in person to take part in the caucus no later than 9am. The event is open to the public, but only residents of Boston Ward 5 who have previously registered to vote as Democrats, or reach 16 years of age by March 29 and have pre-registered to vote as Democrats,

### Sat, 4/5

**BOSTON YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** presents "Music and Magic." The widely-praised youth orchestra, led for this outing by conductor Marta Zurad, wraps symphonic music around a magic show by Matt Roberts. Symphony Hall, 12pm. Tickets \$20 adult/\$5 child. More at [bysoweb.org](http://bysoweb.org)

### Tue, 4/8

The Colleges of the Fenway join the Muddy River Restoration Project Maintenance &

can vote and be elected as delegates or alternates.

**SAT, APRIL 24** Join Fenway CDC's Organizing Committee for an **INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY TEACH-IN** focused on learning about Northeastern's development plans for the next ten years and how residents can provide input. Dinner provided. Contact [cwhite@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:cwhite@fenwaycdc.org) for details. 6-8pm, Newcastle Saranac Community Studio, 607 Columbus Ave.

**SAT, APRIL 26** The Boston Ward 4 Democratic Committee hosts the **WARD 4 DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS** to elect delegates to the 2025 state Democratic convention. Register 10:30-11:15am; Caucus begins 11am; nomination and election of delegates: 12pm. Union Church, 485 Columbus Ave. Registration information: [info@bostonward4dems.org](mailto:info@bostonward4dems.org).

**TUE, APRIL 29** Join the Fenway CDC for its **ANNUAL MEETING** at the Linda K. Paresky Conference Center at Simmons University, 300 The Fenway. Doors open at 5:45pm; program starts at 6:30pm. The meeting will recognize Community Service awardees, highlight FCDC's work throughout 2024, and conduct the second Community Vision Conversation. Light dinner served. To arrange for interpretation or childcare services, email [membership@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:membership@fenwaycdc.org) or call 617-865-9915 by Tuesday, April 22nd. For transportation requests, please email or call Ed Quinn at 617-865-9879, or [equinn@fenwaycdc.org](mailto:equinn@fenwaycdc.org). Register at [eventbrite.com/e/fenway-cdcs-52nd-annual-meeting-community-vision-conversations-tickets-1248616458439](http://eventbrite.com/e/fenway-cdcs-52nd-annual-meeting-community-vision-conversations-tickets-1248616458439).

Management Oversight Committee to present the **19TH MUDDY RIVER SYMPOSIUM**. Join them for the poster session and award ceremony, keynote address on "Environmental Policy Progress in Uncertain Times" by John Rogers of the Union of Concerned Scientists, and buffet dinner. Simmons University's Paresky Center, 300 The Fenway. 6-8:30pm. Register for this free event at [tinyurl.com/COFMRS2025](http://tinyurl.com/COFMRS2025). **FREE**

### Sun, 4/13

• **MUSIC FOR FOOD** continues its 15th season with music by Tulve, Schoenberg, and Poulenc. Admission is free but MFF suggests a donation of \$40 for adults/\$15 for students, with all proceeds going to the Women's Lunch Place. Williams Hall at New England Conservatory, 7pm. Details at [musicforfood.net/boston](http://musicforfood.net/boston).

• Hop in the Delorean and head for the 1980s as the Berklee's top vocal students revisit the music of that era for **BERKLEE SINGERS NIGHT**. Berklee Performance Center, 136 Mass. Ave., 8pm. Tickets \$12 advance/\$17 day of. Get deets at [www.berklee.edu/BPC/full-calendar-of-events-at-the-bpc](http://www.berklee.edu/BPC/full-calendar-of-events-at-the-bpc)

### Sat, 4/26

• **MUDDY RIVER CLEANUP**, part of the annual Earth Day Charles River Cleanup. Part of American Rivers' nationwide River Cleanup® that, to date, has removed more than 25 million pounds of trash from America's waterways. Every year from 2016 to 2019, the Charles River Cleanup won recognition from American Rivers for most pounds of trash collected and most volunteers mobilized. Join 3,000-plus volunteers picking up litter, removing invasive species, and conducting park maintenance throughout the Charles watershed. 10am, varied locations. Register at [emeraldnecklace.org/volunteer/muddy-river-cleanup](http://emeraldnecklace.org/volunteer/muddy-river-cleanup).

• **COMMUNITY CELEBRATION** at Boston Building Resources, 100 Terrace St. The Earth Day event will feature a plant swap, music, food, mosaic making, tie dye, and an energy-saving workshop. **FREE**

### Sun, 4/27

The Huntington celebrates **AUGUST WILSON'S BIRTHDAY** with performances from the winners of the August Wilson New Voices regional competition. 264 Huntington Ave, 1-2:30pm. **FREE**

## What If We Let Nature Help Clean Up the Muddy River?

BY STEVE WOLF

Around 40 people gave up a beautiful early-spring afternoon to attend a March 23 workshop at the Brookline Public Library with the goal of helping shape an upcoming plan to boost water quality and cut pollution in the Muddy River.

Pollution has long plagued the Muddy, the least-healthy surface-level tributary of the Charles River. For more than 20 years the EPA and the Charles River Watershed Association (CWRA) have given every tributary of the Charles a grade based on national standards for swimmable/fishable water. The grades reflect bacteria levels, frequency of toxic cyanobacteria blooms, and combined sewer overflow discharges (when raw sewage mixes with stormwater after heavy rain). Since 2002, grades for the Muddy have bounced between B and F, with a majority of Cs and Ds—and shown no trend toward improvement.

CWRA held the workshop as one of the final community-feedback steps in a two-year visioning



PHOTO: STEVE WOLF



PHOTO: CARLY SHERMAN, CWRA

process to identify nature-based solutions for improving water quality and climate resilience in the Muddy's heavily urbanized watershed.

The workshop opened with an introduction to the issues facing the river and "green infrastructure," increasingly common techniques that harness passive natural processes to clean water without the need for costly, energy-intensive mechanical treatment. Participants then broke into small groups that spent 20 minutes reviewing and responding to each of three proposals for the river. Two of those would involve the Emerald Necklace (the third focused on Chestnut Hill Reservoir).

• **At Leverett Pond**, one recommendation would introduce a wetland area planted with aquatic grasses. Water entering near the Brook House complex would travel along a dredged channel through the grasses—which naturally absorb some pollutants in stormwater runoff—before reaching the open pond and heading down the Muddy toward the Charles.

• **The Back Bay Fens** would get two new features: more "created" wetlands in parts of the pond south of Agassiz Road plus a native-plant pollinator meadow that would fill a portion of the lawn between the Rose Garden and the basketball courts. In contrast to turf, meadows develop deep root systems that more effectively slow stormwater runoff, a key to reducing flooding, and absorb nutrients that pollute open water.

Participants ranked the options and discussed how to build support for the changes (assuming they make it into the final report) and reassure neighbors hesitant to see changes in familiar landscapes. Suggestions included onsite signage and ongoing efforts at community education.

The Emerald Necklace Conservancy and the Consensus-Building Institute joined CWRA in organizing the workshop. The Fenway News will report on the vision report when CWRA issues it this summer.

Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens.