



THE

Fenway News

HYPERLOCAL NEWS FOR THE FENWAY, AUDUBON CIRCLE, KENMORE SQUARE, UPPER BACK BAY, PRUDENTIAL, LONGWOOD, AND MISSION HILL SINCE 1974 • VOLUME 52 NUMBER 4 • APRIL 3 - MAY 1, 2026

PHOTOS: MARY ANN BROGAN

BSO MUSICIANS RALLY TO BACK NELSONS



The BSO set off a firestorm in mid-March with its decision not to renew the contract of chief conductor and music director Andris Nelsons next year. The bombshell announcement blandly blamed the split on the fact that management and Nelsons “were not aligned on future vision.” The musicians themselves only learned about the decision moments before the public did—and they weren’t having it. They quickly released a joint letter critical of the decision alongside a salvo of dissents by individual players, like principal flutist Lorna McGhee, who called the Nelsons’s removal “a form of artistic suicide.” Three retired players, with more than 100 years’ BSO experience among them, appeared on WGBH’s “Boston Public Radio” to voice their objections and praise Nelsons’s leadership. The story went global, appearing in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and

on national broadcasts, among others. Critics from outside the music world panned the decision, management’s handling of the announcement, and a seeming desire to scapegoat Nelsons for long-running financial challenges driven by declining attendance and donations. In a show of solidarity at the March 19 performance, the first since the announcement, the orchestra walked on stage with Nelsons—a dramatic departure from their usual entrance—and the audience responded with a standing ovation. Two days earlier, when Nelsons and the orchestra met for the first time following the rupture, musicians massed on the Huntington Avenue steps of Symphony Hall, above, in a show of support that evoked an emotional response from Nelsons, right.

—STEVE WOLF



Engineering of Muddy River Holds Clues to Low-Water Problem

Editor’s note: The Muddy Water Initiative, which works to improve the health of the Muddy River, commissioned two studies, one hydrological and one historical, to examine the problem of recent low water levels in the Riverway section of river. This article offers an overview of the historical study, focusing on Frederick Law Olmsted’s design and engineering of the man-made river.

BY CARL ZIMBA, PHD

Since the mid-1800s, the Muddy River has been subject to repeated redesign and reconfiguration. Once mostly a salt marsh, the river today is a constructed freshwater stream within the Emerald Necklace and has several distinct sections: Charlesgate, Back Bay Fens, the Riverway, Olmsted Park with Leverett Pond, and Jamaica Pond. Recently, the US Army Corps of Engineers completed a project to daylight and dredge much of the river. While their work has resulted in a vast improvement in flood resilience, the current water level in the Muddy’s Riverway section is quite low, with many mud flats exposed.

In 1800, the Fens was a broad salt marsh tidal estuary of both the Muddy River and Stony Brook. The water level rose and fell with the Charles River and Boston Harbor, a twice-daily movement of 10 feet or more. The high tide line of the Muddy was near the current location of Leverett Pond. As the tide came in, it covered vast areas of exposed mud flats, refreshing the salt marshes with new salt water and nutrients. As the tide left, it carried away the detritus and sewage that residents and businesses had dumped into the water.

In 1879 and 1880, Frederick Law Olmsted proposed a redesigned Muddy River and Fens that was primarily a sanitary improvement. In doing so, Olmsted made a clear design choice between “A broad, shallow stream with open borders of meadow and

marsh [that] will keep itself sweet and wholesome, while a narrow, deep channel with confined banks is apt to become foul and offensive.”

A key aspect of Olmsted’s design was improved flood control, using nearly all the space between today’s Park Drive and the Fenway—nearly 100 acres—to store flood waters. Walking along the river today, the edges of the floodplain are clearly indicated by the elevated roadways and berms of Olmsted’s design. Further improvements included rerouting both the Muddy River and Stony Brook directly to the Charles River, greatly reducing the level of sewage entering the Fens salt marsh. In 1892, Olmsted severed the connection between the Fens and both the Muddy River and Stony Brook, effectively creating two water systems: one in the Fens, and the other as the Muddy River. The Muddy River, including the stormwater overflows, flowed down the Muddy River Conduit to the Charles River. The Stony Brook Conduit directed the normal flow of Stony Brook toward the Charles, while stormwater overflows were allowed to enter the Fens.

At the same time, Olmsted created the Brookline Avenue Gatehouse, located near the present-day 401 Park, which separated the salt marsh of the Fens from the

freshwater flows coming from upriver. It also maintained the freshwater pool from Leverett Pond to Park Drive [then Audubon Road] at Elevation 11 Boston Common Base datum [BCB], later adjusted to Elevation 9.5 BCB. Numerous drawings and texts by Olmsted verify these elevations. If the current Muddy River above the Brookline Avenue gate valve were maintained at Elevation 9.5 BCB, it would be approximately 2 feet higher than the present-day Charles River.

Olmsted’s salt marsh in the Fens was short-lived, becoming obsolete when the first dam to Boston Harbor, the Craigie Street Dam, was built in 1910. At that time, the entire basin from Craigie Street to the Watertown Dam, including the Fens, became freshwater with a design elevation of 8 BCB. This led to a redesign of the Fens, including a new planting scheme.

Much change occurred over the next two decades, most of it rather haphazard and undocumented. Large tracts of the salt marsh were filled in to form land that became the Joseph Lee Playgrounds (1912—now the Roberto Clemente Ballfields), the Rose Garden (1931), the War Memorial, and the Victory Gardens (1911), largely with the advice of Arthur Shurcliff and the Olmsted brothers, sons of F.L. Olmsted. While

these areas are still vital parts of the floodplain, the reservoir volume that once existed has been significantly reduced. In 1958, the Sears Roebuck Company created a parking lot in the westernmost section between Park Drive and Fenway, over a culverted section of the Muddy River under Park Drive.

MOVING FORWARD

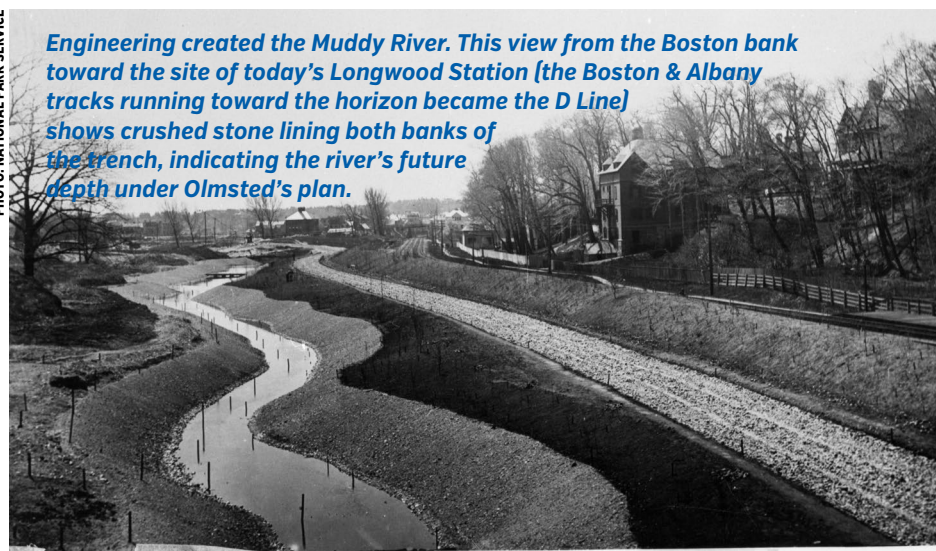
It is clear from the historical record and present-day measurements that the Muddy River in the Riverway and Olmsted Park held more water in 1900 than it does today. Olmsted’s design maintained a constant stream elevation, essentially a lake, between Park Drive and Leverett Pond. The current situation is not what Olmsted intended nor is it acceptable to current residents and stakeholders.

The work done by the Army Corps of Engineers to remove sediment and daylight stretches of the Muddy River has resulted in much improved flood capacity and resilience. With less sediment however, there is less resistance to water flow along the length of the Muddy River, resulting in lower stream elevation and many exposed mud flats. Missing in the redeveloped Muddy River is a way to elevate the water level as Olmsted’s Brookline Avenue Gatehouse, removed in the 1940s, did. The flow restriction control structure installed by the Army Corps served much the same purpose but was also recently removed.

If the Muddy River has always been shaped by design, then its future will be as well. The question now is whether we are willing to look back carefully enough to move forward wisely—and restore not just the river’s function, but the vision that once guided it.

Carl Zimba, Ph.D., a molecular spectroscopist, developed a detailed depth chart of the Charles River in partnership with the MIT Sea Grant Program. The historical research he conducted as part of that work led to his interest in Olmsted’s work with the Muddy River.

PHOTO: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



Engineering created the Muddy River. This view from the Boston bank toward the site of today’s Longwood Station (the Boston & Albany tracks running toward the horizon became the D Line) shows crushed stone lining both banks of the trench, indicating the river’s future depth under Olmsted’s plan.

FENSVIEWS

How About Development That Responds to Residents' Needs?

BY NARDELLA THOMAS

Yes, it has been a brutal winter in Boston. My personal winter reflection: for a day or two, the snow was beautiful—the kind of snow that reminds you why you live in the Northeast. But after weeks of storms, slush, and sidewalks narrowed to icy trenches, yeah, “I’m over it.”

Winter has blanketed every corner of Boston, and as the snow piles up and frigid temperatures linger day after day, you start noticing things you normally wouldn’t.

One thing you rarely see in these conditions: cyclists.

It’s true, this isn’t a knock on bicyclists. When the streets are wet, slushy, and packed with snowbanks, you bike at your own risk. Bike lanes disappear under plowed snow.

Why bring this up?

GUEST OPINION

Because recently I listened to a public meeting discussing an Article 80 development proposal in Mission Hill. For more than two hours, residents, developers, and City representatives discussed the project. And what I absorbed was how differently each group approached the conversation.

Three buckets emerged clearly: the neighborhood, the developers, and the City.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD: THEY GET IT

The residents who attended the meeting came prepared. Having seen many housing structures arise in their neighborhood, residents understood the proposal and its implications. The past, present, and future of their neighborhood, their North Star.

Many residents pointed out what seemed obvious: the project appears to be a dorm without calling itself a dorm. Attractive to students resistant to being ruled by university housing.

In my opinion, what stood out most was the neighborhood’s message about families. Mission Hill residents made it clear—this community is 1,000 percent pro-family. Their concerns weren’t anti-development.

They were pro-community and pro-growth.

Residents earnestly asked developers for concessions to configure units that work for families. They advocated for larger units and a housing mix that reflects people who want to build lives in the neighborhood, not just pass through it.

Residents spoke thoughtfully about parking pressures, noise concerns, and the financial strain new development can place on long-time neighbors. They weren’t just critiquing the project—they were offering solutions.

DEVELOPERS: A GREEN-LIGHT AGENDA

The development team was professional and respectful. Yet I felt this gnawing sense that the presentation was delivered more out of compliance than a genuine conversation.

Developers emphasized how the project met technical criteria, particularly through square footage calculations. Meeting a regulatory threshold may satisfy the rules, but it doesn’t automatically make a project a good fit for a neighborhood.

There was also noticeable hubris when it came to transportation assumptions. Much of the discussion leaned heavily on cycling and mobility concepts that feel disconnected from the day-to-day realities of Parker Hill—especially during a Boston winter when bike lanes effectively disappear. The spokesperson staunchly insisted bikers would not mind the daily trudge up and down the steep hills.

The spokesperson assured the audience that if the developer himself could have attended the meeting, he would have. Hmmm, interestingly enough, the spokesperson never offered to hold another meeting or expand a future meeting to include abutting neighborhoods.

THE CITY: NOTE-TAKING 101

Then there was the City.

Representatives attended from the Planning Department and offices of city councilors. However, they provided little in the way to bridge the disconnect between the residents and the developer’s team. At

one point, residents were told that City officials were primarily there to “take notes.”

That comment landed poorly.

As a first-time participant, I have a lot of questions. What will City officials actually take back to the zoning board? Why did we not hear the position of the city councilor either for or against the proposal and the reason(s) behind their decision?

THE TAKEAWAY

Boston prides itself on being a city of neighborhoods. If that principle is going to mean anything, residents must remain engaged in shaping the development around them. After all, it is the residents who know their neighborhoods best.

My first community meeting on a proposed development will not be my last. I hope more residents—whether curious or deeply informed—attend these meetings and make their voices heard. Contact your representatives whenever you can: at-large city councilors, the planning board, the zoning board, and your state representatives. Let them know where you stand.

But the responsibility does not rest only with residents. City officials must make a more concerted effort to require developers to build housing that supports families. A city that talks about affordability and homeownership must also insist on unit configurations that make family life possible.

This particular meeting, if the planning assumption for a 114-unit building rests on the idea that residents will bike up Parker Hill year-round, Winter tells us otherwise. When the snow falls, the bikes vanish.

This debate is not simply about building more housing.

Boston neighborhoods are unique, not in a “not in my backyard” way, but in a “make it make sense” way. Developers and the City must work to present development proposals reflecting the needs of the neighborhoods people call home.

A former resident of Mattapan, Nardella Thomas is founder of the National Coalition Against Predatory Lending, and a member of Boston in Common.

LETTERS

A Healthy Riverway Will Need Enviro-Friendly Flow Regulation

TO THE EDITOR

The Muddy Water Initiative (MWI)—one of the only organizations in Boston solely dedicated to the health of the Muddy River—is grateful for your recent coverage of the low-water crisis in the Riverway. Alison Pultinas captured the issue with clarity and care in your February issue.

MWI has focused on this problem since it first emerged as a serious threat to the river’s health in spring 2023. In early 2024, we began engaging professional expertise to inform both our advocacy and potential solutions for an issue affecting human and wildlife alike. With support from the Commonwealth, the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance, and the Friends of the Muddy River, we commissioned Terraphase Engineering to conduct a hydrological study. We also consulted Dr. Carl Zimba (*see page 1*) whose expertise helped trace the problem’s roots to a misunderstanding of the river’s historical design. These efforts drew on a wide network of stakeholders, including the Boston Water and Sewer Commission, the Greater Boston chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Charles River Watershed Association, Harvard GSD Archives, and others.

Over the past 15 months, we’ve presented our findings to the Boston Parks Department, the Town of Brookline, DCR, the state Undersecretary of the

Environment, Sens. Will Brownsberger and Cynthia Stone Creem, and others. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Our conclusion is clear: the river’s current condition reflects both its origins as a man-made system—two engineered waterways later inadvertently connected—and the removal of flow-control devices planned by Frederick Law Olmsted that maintained water levels for more than 100 years.

The solution is equally clear. To restore a healthy, functional river, we must reintroduce a modern, environmentally sensitive flow-regulation system—one that supports people, fish, and wildlife alike. The current trash-strewn mud flats do not reflect Olmsted’s vision, nor the needs

Please see another letter about Riverway section of the Emerald Necklace on page 8.

and expectations of the communities that border, use, and love this landscape.

After sustained advocacy, MWI has secured state support and potential funding for an alternatives study to identify the best path forward. We are grateful for the strong coalition—public, private, and community-based—working together to restore the Muddy River.

With gratitude,

CAROLINE REEVES, PHD
UPPER BACK BAY

SENIOR EVENTS

The Pererborough Senior Center is free and open to everyone on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 12–3:30pm. Drop in for a program or two and bring your friends! For more information call Tracey or Ariana at 617-536-7154.

- Wed, April 8 and 15 at 12pm: **TECH HOUR**
- Wed April 8 and 15 at 1:15pm: **INTERGENERATIONAL CITYSITES**
- Thu, April 9 at 12pm: **EASTER & SPRING TRIVIA** with community police officers

- Tue, April 14 at 12pm: **MOVIE SCREENING—“BACK TO SCHOOL”**
- Thu, April 16 at 12pm: **STATE SEN. WILL BROWNSBERGER and CHARLIECARD SIGN-UP**
- Thu, April 23 at 12pm: **TALK WITH SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE**
- Tuesday, April 28 at 12pm: **SILK BLOOMS CRAFT WITH JAN LOUISSAINT**
- Thu, April 30 at 12pm: **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY** with Veronica Topp

THE Fenway News

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NEXT ISSUE APPEARS
Friday, May 1

ISSUE DEADLINE
Send letters, news items, and ads by
Friday, April 24

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. If the original motto no longer fits today’s Fenway, we remain committed to its spirit of identifying problems and making our neighborhood a better and safer place to live.

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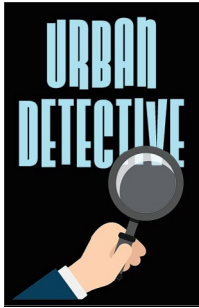
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A Closer Look at the Fenway-Boylston Historic District

BY ED BALLO

While a number of individual buildings in the Fenway are designated as national historic landmarks (Fenway Studios and the Massachusetts Historical Society building, for example), there is only one historic district—the Fenway-Boylston Historic District. The district was created in 1984 through the efforts of local preservationists to ward off destruction or inappropriate development and as a catalyst for the thoughtful re-use of 73 Hemenway St., listed as the Girl's Trade School on our map and now the Fensgate Cooperative.



The buildings in the district were built within a span of 20 years (approximately 1890-1907) and display a variety of architectural styles.

Let's step back in time a bit to get better oriented. This area represents the western edge of pre-landfill Gravelly Point, a tongue of low-lying and marshy land that nearly divided the original Back Bay in two.

The first Back Bay dams were built after the Massachusetts legislature authorized in 1814 a speculative venture to harness the bay's tides to power watermills; the bay remained tidal until construction of the Charles River Dam (now beneath the Museum of Science) in 1910. Some 80 years—and hundreds of tons of landfill later—the Fenway emerged briefly as a fashionable new frontier for the city's elite. In that period we see elegant mansions facing the recently created Fens, the first real jewel in the Emerald Necklace by Frederick Law Olmsted. The stretch of the street now called the Fenway, between Boylston Street and Westland Avenue, houses an intact row of these mansions.

The historic district has a curious contour, as you can see from the map—essentially a capital cédille or Ç. It begins on the upper right with the former Carlton Chambers Bostonian Hotel, now occupied



The Boston Medical Library building at 8 The Fenway Reminiscent of Viking ships, the rafters stand today belongs to the Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

by Berklee, at Boylston and Hemenway; wraps around the Mass. Historical Society; then follows the line of the Fenway south to Westland Avenue. The tail beneath the "C" encompasses the Johnson Gates, designed by architect Guy Lowell of MFA fame and the designer of 73 Hemenway.

Within this district, let's explore 8 The Fenway, currently a Boston Conservatory at Berklee building with a music library, study, practice rooms, and performance spaces. The 1891 building exhibits elements of the Italian style such as the large rounded arched windows on the "piano nobile" (principal floor in classical architecture). Yet, at the roof line it displays an evocative line of gables, dormers and finials that give it a Dutch feel. It is, however, the original incarnation of the building where the Urban Detective finds true interest!

Until the mid-1960s, this was the home of the Boston Medical Library (BML). In 1875, the Society for Medical Observation, the Society for Medical Improvement, the Massachusetts General Hospital, and the Boston Public Library decided that the city needed one library where all medical texts should be gathered and accessible. The BML was incorporated as an independent institution under the control of the profession as a whole. Its first librarian was gynecologist James Read Chadwick (1844-1905), remembered today for the "Chadwick Sign," a condition that appears as one of the first physical signs of pregnancy. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., was the BML's first president. Holmes was a towering figure in 19th-century Boston—a poet (Old Ironsides), physician, professor, writer and lecturer.

Venturing into the building when school is in session, climb to the third floor and the main room of the library. More than 125 years later, the honey-colored walnut woodwork in classical motifs creates a warm and hospitable atmosphere. Yet, the Detective found Seully Hall, the performance space on the fourth floor, more intriguing. Here, the roof rafters are heavy, dark and reminiscent of the hull of a Viking ship. Ferocious dragon heads protrude menacingly from the upper walls. The choice of a Viking motif seems strange today, but in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many Bostonians believed that the Norse had made landfall on New England's shores around 1000 AD. Despite a lack of any documented evidence, we can spot Viking



Charlesgate East or the bridge abutments of the Longfellow Bridge.

Despite the historical designation, the architectural integrity of the distinct has come under attack. Development proposed for 38 The Fenway is judged unsympathetic and out of scale by neighborhood preservationists. It follows in the footsteps of a renovation approved during the pandemic that added a decidedly modern floor atop a historic building. The thorny question remains, how to balance progress and tradition?

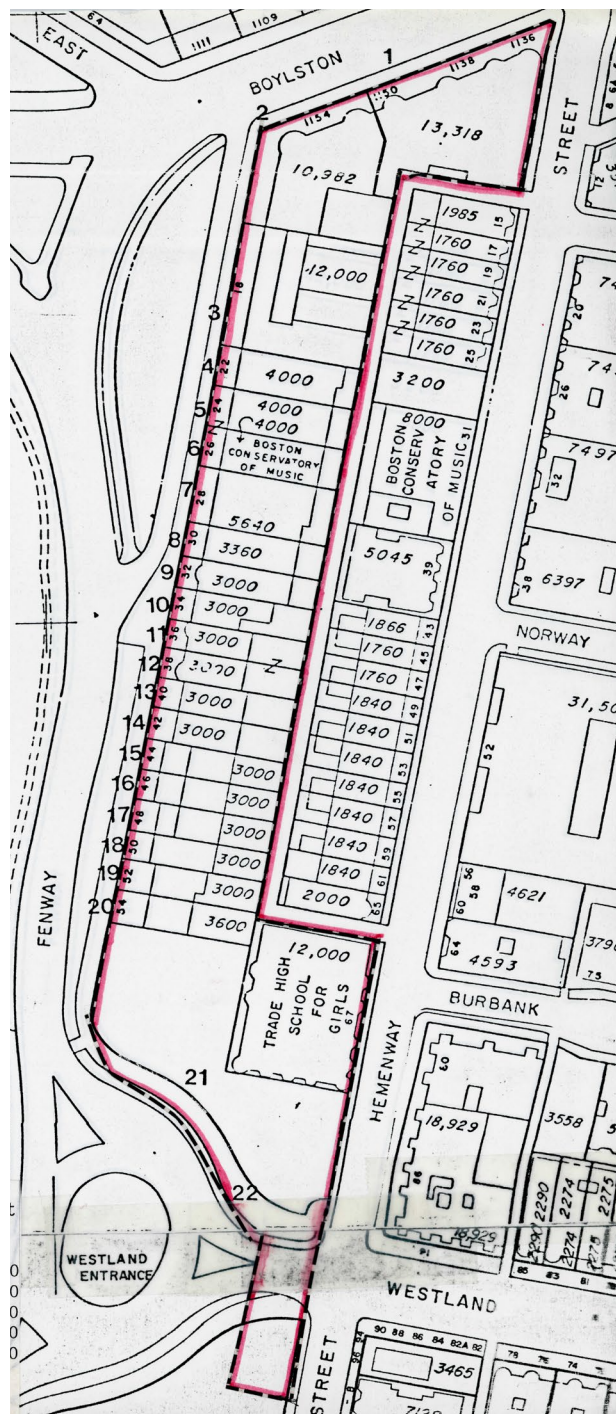
Ed Ballo lives in the West Fens. His periodic "Urban Detective" column presents small bites of local history to help decipher the city around you and enhance your appreciation of it.

motifs around the city. such the statue of Leif Ericsson on Commonwealth Ave. at

Plows Mow Down Boylston Bike Posts



Two blizzards within a month left mountains of cleared snow along the sides of many Boston streets that lingered for weeks in the extreme cold of early March. This mound by the entrance to Fenway Health in the 1300 block of Boylston Street included a garnish of bike-lane flexposts that fell victim to plowing.

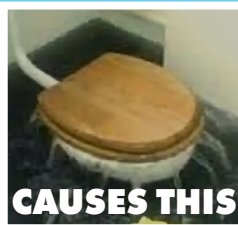


The Fenway-Boylston Street District

Keep Wipes out of Pipes! Wipes Belong in the Trash



DOING THIS



CAUSES THIS

Wipes that claim to be "flushable" and "sewer safe" in fact are not sewer friendly. These wipes do not break down as they travel through pipes and the public sewer system. Instead, they create backups in your home plumbing and can cause sewer overflows in the street. To protect your plumbing and the sanitary sewer system, only toilet paper belongs in the toilet. No wipes!



AND THIS!

MAKE SURE THESE ITEMS ARE DISPOSED OF IN THE TRASH- NOT THE TOILET:

- Bathroom Wipes
- Baby Wipes
- Disinfecting Wipes
- Towelettes
- Toilet Paper



SHADOWS CONSUME LONGWOOD MEETINGS—AGAIN

BY GRANT HILLYER & STEVE WOLF

Two March public meetings for Longwood Place focused heavily on the shadow impacts of the first phase of the project, one residential and two commercial buildings that in aggregate will add 1,043,000 square feet of development and rise to 295 feet. The Boston Planning and Development Board approved a planned development area (PDA) for the site, currently Simmons dorms, in March 2023. A series of meetings this year have addressed developer Skanska’s recent filings with specific details for the buildings (to win a PDA designation, Skanska only needed to indicate general size, massing, and design).

Presentations by Skanska’s consultants quickly dispensed with project elements; beyond the buildings, these include below-grade parking and loading, two acres of carefully designed and publicly accessible open space, and 9,000 square feet of community space.

The consultants pivoted to shadow studies performed on the fleshed-out building designs. In 2022 to 2023, many residents and parks advocates argued strongly for lower heights to reduce shadows cast on the Riverway and Back Bay Fens, but the City granted the PDA without requiring any change. Last month’s presentations focused on alternatives that shifted mass from the tops of buildings to their bases and/or middles to lessen structural overhangs. The team also described reducing the screening around rooftop mechanicals.

The massing alternatives increased new shadow on the parks compared to the 2023 massing, but the lower screening reduced new shadows by 5% or less at 9am on the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, key milestone dates in shadow studies.

The new submission goes before the Civic Design Commission on April 7; submit comments before the meeting to bcdc@boston.gov. The Planning Board will vote on approving the project April 16.

Grant Hillyer and Steve Wolf both live in the West Fens.

A Move For Some Park Trees, An Axe For Others

BY ALISON PULTINAS

PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS



Tree-removal signs went up mid-March—Joslin Park, a public park in the Longwood Area off of Brookline Avenue, will close indefinitely during construction of a new cancer hospital. Dana Farber Cancer Institute and Beth Israel Hospital, the hospital’s builders, will save one red maple and transplant nine smaller trees—birch and flowering cherry—in the Back Bay Fens. They will cut down 12 others, including a large apple tree.

“O” marks the spot for trees being moved from Joslin Park to the Back Bay Fens.

Because Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution protects against the loss of public parkland, the redesign of the park for a new roadway involves the state legislature. State Sens. Michael Rush and Will Brownsberger co-filed one bill on March 24 and State Rep. Kevin Honan subsequently filed another with the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government for a hearing scheduled on April 8.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

SOX BOX

FRI, 4/3 2:10PM	SAT, 4/4 4:10PM	SUN, 4/5 1:35PM	MON, 4/6 6:45PM
TUE, 4/7 6:45PM	WED, 4/8 1:35PM	FRI, 4/17 7:15PM	SAT, 4/18 4:10PM
SUN, 4/19 1:35PM	MON, 4/20 11:10AM	TUE, 4/21 6:45PM	WED, 4/22 6:45PM
	THU, 4/23 6:10PM		

DASHBOARD

TRASH & RECYCLING PICK-UPS

BACK BAY	FENWAY	MISSION HILL
Monday and Thursday	Tuesday and Friday	Tuesday and Friday

STREET CLEANING

Street cleaning (and towing) resumed on April 1. In the Fenway, you need to check both City and DCR schedules to see when street cleaning takes place. Find City info at tinyurl.com/s9fyarf8. See the DCR schedule at tinyurl.com/4usvd8w3.



People. Housing. Policy.



53rd Annual Meeting: In Community

Thursday, April 16 | 5:45–8:00pm | Simmons University

Doors Open & Dinner: 5:45–6:30pm | Program: 6:30–8:00pm

A light dinner will be served, including vegetarian and gluten-free options.

Join us as we gather in community to reflect and shape what’s next!

Featuring: In Conversation with Rachel and Romy



Speaker:
Rachel Wilson
Long-time resident & organizer



Moderator:
Jonathan Cohn
Policy Director, Progressive
Massachusetts



Speaker:
Romy St. Hilaire
Incoming Co-President, Fenway
Community Center, artist & entrepreneur

Community Service Awardees

Fenway
Community
Center

Charles Settles
community leader,
poet & artist

Tim Coakley • Amelia Hill
Rosaria Salerno
departing board members

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FREE AND OPEN TO ALL



- Request transportation, interpretation, or childcare by April 9.
- Questions? Contact membership@fenwayforwad.org or call 781-277-0148

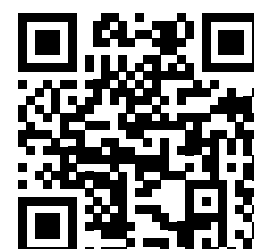


City of Boston
Planning
Department

The City of Boston’s Planning Department invites residents to participate in planning that will help shape the future of the City.

You can sign up to receive Planning Department emails and learn about opportunities to get involved here:

bosplans.org/GetInvolved



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

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

NEC's Jordan Hall hosted "Concert in Solidarity With Afghan Musicians," organized by Afghan pianist and composer Arson Fahim. The event, protesting the Taliban's total ban on music, brought together Afghan performers and an 80-piece orchestra to play new, specially commissioned music. 🏹 **Dr. Kevin Tabb announced that he plans to retire in 2027 as head of Beth Israel Lahey Health, where he's served as CEO for 14 years.** 🏹 Meanwhile, just down Brookline Ave., Whoop will nearly double its head count by hiring 600 new employees this year. Most will work in the wearable-tech company's Kenmore Square headquarters, according to the *Globe*. 🏹 **California-based Carbon Health, which operates a walk-in clinic in the West Fens, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization. It operates 93 clinics in eight states. *Becker's Hospital Review* says that Carbon will continue seeing patients during the reorganization, with "no interruption to urgent care, primary care or virtual services. Patients will also retain full access to their medical records...."** 🏹 *Boston Business Journal* named District 8 City Councilor Sharon Durkan to its "40 under 40" list for 2026. 🏹 **In more honors, the Charles River Watershed Association used its annual meeting on March 26 to present its "Activist Award" to the three groups working to revitalize the Charlesgate section of the Emerald Necklace—Charlesgate Alliance, Emerald Necklace Conservancy, and the Esplanade Association.** 🏹 Northeastern will see stars (well, one, anyway) when former Disney Channel princess Hilary Duff delivers the commencement address April 29 in Fenway Park. 🏹 **Ted Landsmark stepped down from the BRA board after 12 years. An educator, lawyer, and activist, Landsmark will continue to maintain multiple ties to the Fenway and Mission Hill as a board member for the Fenway Alliance and Emerald Necklace Conservancy, as an honorary trustee at the MFA, and as director of Northeastern's Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy.** 🏹 The acclaimed Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, which regularly plays Symphony Hall under the baton of Benjamin Zander, will end operations for itself and its Youth Orchestra after the 2026-27 season. Zander, 87, founded the ensemble in 1979 and has led it since then. 🏹 **After a flash unionization drive, 160 food and hospitality workers at the Harvard Club on Comm. Ave. will join the United Food & Commercial Workers, according to the *Globe*. The untipped workers cited low pay in an expensive region as a motivating issue. They have gone without a contract for nearly three years.** 🏹

ICYMI

NEWSLINES

Funding Comes Through for New Queensberry Housing

Fenway Forward has secured State and City funding to underwrite a development that will add deeply affordable and highly energy-efficient apartments on Queensberry Street. The 24-unit building—13 studios and 11 one-bedroom apartments—will replace a boarded-up laundromat at 112-114 Queensberry and will meet Passive House standards that require high levels of insulation and efficient all-electric systems that, together, cut energy use drastically. The funding will allow the nonprofit developer to charge rents affordable to households making 30, 50, and 60 percent of the Area Median Income. The funds reserving three apartments for formerly homeless households and another two for Department of Mental Health clients. Steve Farrell, Fenway Forward's executive director, said the project would "help ensure that people who might otherwise not be able to afford one of Boston's most desirable neighborhoods can live here." The nonprofit acquired the site, a former laundromat, in 2024 but lacked the financing to proceed until now. That money has come in the form of \$2.8 million from the Mayor's Office of Housing and an unspecified grant from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. That State money represents a slice of \$140 million it distributed in February to support construction of 1,300 homes across the Commonwealth, figures that work out to about \$107,000 for each unit built, which would mean roughly \$2.6 million in this case. District 8 Councilor Sharon Durkan, State Rep. Dan Ryan, and State Sen. Will Brownsberger all praised the project, with Durkan noting that only 15 projects across Massachusetts received the state grants.

Local Projects Take Home BSA Awards

This year's design awards from the Boston Society for Architecture brought honors to two structures and one group with strong ties to the Fenway and Mission Hill. The eight-year-long renovation of the Christian Science Church on Mass. Ave. snagged one of two Honor Awards for buildings. The jury praised "the thoughtful and careful restoration" of both the historic original church (1894) and the neoclassical extension built in 1906, calling it "a masterful preservation project and an impressive case study in historic preservation and public accessibility." (Alexander Finegold Architects with Simpson Gompertz & Heger). Less prominent but equally important, the Madison Park/Dewitt Playground between Ruggles Station and Nubian Square, received an "Alternative Projects" commendation. The renovation elevates garden-variety basketball courts by surrounding them with an asphalt border covered in playful geometric shapes. Bright red shade structures sit on the pavement, playing off a wide photo-mural set into a sculptural fence and highlighting iconic leaders of color, from Harriet Tubman to Elma Lewis, Mel King, and Sonia Sotomayor (design by Studio Luz Architects with artist Marlon Forrester). Finally, A BSA Commonwealth Award for "outstanding influence on our built environment or our awareness of it" went to the Emerald Necklace Conservancy. The award celebrated the group's nearly 30-year record of "preserving Olmsted's historic legacy and ensuring that these treasured parks continue to serve the common good for generations to come."

Berklee Awards Neighborhood Improvement Grants

Berklee College of Music announced its Neighborhood Improvement Grants at the end of February. A total of \$25,000 in grants will be distributed to the Charlesgate Alliance, Fenway Civic Association, Fenway Forward, Friends of Ramler Park, Kaji Aso Studio, and the Muddy Water Initiative. The grants will support a range of activities, including free community fitness classes, a restoration and public installation project, continuation of the Fenway Free Market, and a free Japanese summer festival celebration.



N Northeastern University
City and Community Engagement

   @nuengaged

COMMUNITY COWORKING

AT NORTHEASTERN CROSSING

Northeastern Crossing is the university's public community space that is free to the public and available for community-based organizations and groups.

Organizations and individuals are invited to utilize NU Crossing as a workspace during specific hours throughout the week. Sign up on Eventbrite to use this free space with wi-fi, snacks, coffee, printers, and collaboration!



Northeastern Crossing is regularly open from 9am-5pm, Monday through Friday, and work spaces are available when other groups have not already booked the space.



This is a shared space, if you need to take meetings, please bring headphones or speak with the staff on site about available private spaces.



Hours are subject to change each week based on space availability.

Questions? Contact Community Relations & Programs Manager, Monée Vance at:

 mo.vance@northeastern.edu  617.992.0407



Register on Eventbrite!

The Arts

MAAM's Upstairs/Downstairs Shows Pair Different Kinds of Art

BY STEVE WOLF

In the handful of years since MassArt Art Museum reopened, the virtues of its reconfiguration have come into focus—particularly its capacity to mount a traditional gallery-style exhibition on the first floor while hosting an immersive installation in the soaring box that fills the second and third. Which is exactly what the museum is doing now.

Push & Pull: Two Decades at the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Shop

That first-floor exhibition combines an unexpected history lesson with an array of luscious prints. “Push & Pull” traces the history of Robert Blackburn’s New York

City printmaking studio, an oasis of artistic innovation, collaboration, and racial integration from the 1950s to the 2000s. (The studio still operates, but Blackburn died in 2003.)

Jamaican-born Blackburn founded and led the studio—although *led* seems like the wrong word for this communal operation. His remarkable artistic journey stretched from the Harlem Renaissance through Depression-era WPA projects through mid- and late 20th-century art movements. The list of revered artists and writers he knew or worked with includes Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, and James Baldwin. As a master printmaker he produced prints for Robert Motherwell, Helen Frankenthaler, and Jasper Johns.

Blackburn taught in New York and internationally, won awards (including a MacArthur Fellowship), and even designed ceramic murals for a New York City subway station. Yet, the prints that form the bulk of this show—by artists who became part of the workshop community—strongly suggest that the welcoming spirit Blackburn nurtured might stand as his defining work of art.

Many of these prints revel in a rich blackness (I mean that chromatically, but it’s also thematically apt), tempered or intensified by the surfaces they sit on: creamy papers, book-binding cloth, even silk organza. Elizabeth Catlett’s *Lovely Twice*, for example, superimposes two images of a confident young woman, one head-on, one in three-quarter profile. She defines the face with precise stippling then resolves its intense blackness with a nimbus of lines, stains, and patches that become grayer as they move out from the center.

By contrast, color bursts from Michael Kelly Williams’s *Algiers Hotel*, but closer inspection makes it clear that this visual energy doesn’t represent joy. Williams evokes Picasso’s *Guernica* in an anguished cry over Martin Luther King’s assassination. Tanks, flames, pigs, cannons, houses, skulls, and other shapes swirl chaotically around a sign for the Memphis motel where King died, unsettled and unsettling.

Renee Cox’s *Liberating Insight in Fuschia* stands out—literally. Astonishingly intricate mirrored images orbit the center of circle. From a distance it looks like a mandala. Apparently photos of the artist herself, the symmetrical images fill the circle, hypnotic in their repetition, meticulously cut, mounted, and raised above a black cloth background by tiny, hand-crafted gold columns.

Like these three, every work in this show rewards careful viewing.

Midnight March

Following the museum’s post-pandemic reopening, *Valkyrie Mumbet* hung in MAAM’s upstairs gallery. With vast tentacles suspended in midair, the jaw-dropping piece suggested an overwhelming and disturbing creature, somewhere between a spider and an octopus, yet everything about its composition—its riot of colors, fabric patterns, fringes, LED lights, macrame, and spangles—made it feel almost cuddly. Joana Vasconelos created the piece to honor Elizabeth Freeman—Mumbet—an enslaved woman who sued for and won her freedom in 1781, citing the ban on slavery in the new Massachusetts constitution.

In scale and complexity, *Midnight March* by Japanese-born artist Masako Miki proves a worthy successor. With the installation space’s walls painted an inky blue, lit sporadically by spotlights, and awash in stylized stars, *Midnight March* presents Miki’s update of a 1,000-year-old Japanese folk tale, *Hyakki*



PHOTO: STEVE WOLF
“Midnight March”

Yagyō. Translating as “The Night Parade of One Hundred Demons,” the story describes a terrifying riot by spirit-world monsters. “Chaos reigned as villagers hid behind locked doors,” the catalog explains. “They feared [that] the boundary between the human world and the demon realm might collapse.”

Japanese tradition long represented the *yagyō* as freaks and demons (for an example, see tinyurl.com/4yhmmuav), but Miki interprets them more whimsically, as creatures with colorful, bloblike bodies that would look right at home in a book by America’s favorite surrealist, Dr. Seuss. Miki created the hides through needle-felting, a laborious craft that requires, we learn from signage, “repeatedly stabbing wool with a coarse needle to condense the fibers into three-dimensional forms”

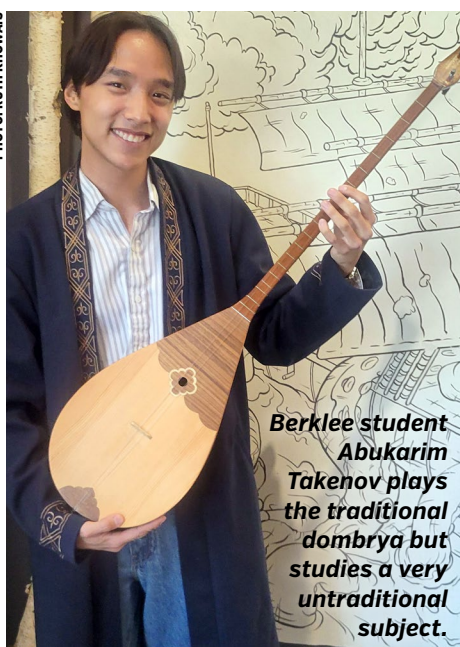
The felted “hides” of these *yagyō* combine irregular blotches of yellow, pink, green, red, ochre, and blue. Others sport multicolored spots, while a couple of non-conformists greet us wearing solid cerulean blue or red-orange. The shapes suggest onions, melons, eggs, or, appropriately enough, edamame, all perched atop spindly, bird-like legs of walnut.

No description can fully convey the charm of wandering among these creatures, which you can inspect up close (no roped-off zones or motion-triggered alarms here). After fraternizing with the *yagyō*, climb the stairs or ride the elevator to the third-floor balcony for an aerial view. You’ll also find paintings and polished brass sculptures created by Miki and depicting some of the recurring *yagyō* shapes/characters in the installation, such as a stack of mushrooms and a whimsical two-tailed cat holding a fan (Hello, kitty!).

Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens. Both shows run at MAAM through May 31.

Musician Bridges Ancient Tradition, 21st-Century Gaming at Berklee

PHOTO: RUTH KHOWAIS



Berklee student Abukarim Takenov plays the traditional dombra but studies a very untraditional subject.

BY RUTH KHOWAIS

West Fens resident Abukarim Takenov is one of a few students at Berklee College from Kazakhstan. Once part of the Soviet empire, Kazakhstan, which borders Russia, gained independence in 1991 after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Abukarim plays the electric bass and a Central Asian two-stringed instrument called a dombra. He is in a four-piece band that plays locally. The 20-year-old is a second-year student at Berklee majoring in game and interactive media scoring. The discipline resembles scoring music for films, explained Abukarim, but for online games. His courses explore the history of music in video games and then applies that knowledge through interactive scoring projects. “In gaming,” he said, “the music reacts to what you are doing.” Abukarim said

that next year Berklee will provide connections to the gaming industry for his senior project. He hopes to work in the field composing music.

When he was 16, Abukarim never imagined he’d become a student in the United States. He and a friend were composing music and his goal was to become a professional musician. The friend told him that there was a college in the United States that specialized in music. “I didn’t think it would be possible to go there,” said Abukarim. He had an interview online where he played the electric bass, and Berklee offered him a scholarship. His parents have not quite adjusted to his being so far away, but he keeps in touch with them via WhatsApp.

His first language is Russian, which he speaks at home, as well as Kazakh, his country’s national language, related to Turkish. At age 14, he taught himself to speak English.

Abukarim is from Almaty, the largest city in Kazakhstan, located in the foothills of the Trans-Ili Alatau mountains and a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Abukarim grew up hiking, ice skating, and skiing. He said that the mountains there are similar to the Alps. Almaty is also famous, according to Abukarim, for producing musicians. “Most musicians in Kazakhstan are from Almaty.”

The best part of Berklee, Abukarim said, is his connection to other students. He also enjoys the walk through the park to get to Berklee in the early morning. In his music, he wants to blend the traditional music of Kazakhstan with more modern music. He also wants to share his culture. Kazakhstanis, he said, value community. They value being together. “The better we treat a guest,” said Abukarim, “the better we are as a person.”

He has found togetherness with his group of friends at Berklee.

Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens.

FENWAY STUDIOS OPEN HOUSE & FOOD DRIVE

Thanks to a computer glitch, a report on Fenway Studios’ annual open house never reached *The Fenway News* last fall. Discovery of the error last month means that we can now report—just a tad tardily—that more than 1,100 visitors toured the 1905 building last November 8 and 9. The annual open house draws Bostonians for a look inside a National Historic Landmark—the country’s oldest purpose-built live/work space for visual artists—where multiple artists throw open their studios to showcase and sell their work. 2025 marked the 17th year that the event has included a food drive. The November drive yielded two-dozen bags of nonperishable food donated by visitors, plus a \$500 donation, both of which went to Jamaica Plain-based Victory Programs, which supports “individuals and families facing homelessness, addiction, and other chronic health conditions.”



Visitors joined artist Ken Kelleher (plaid shirt) and his friend Andrew Ochrymowych in Kelleher’s studio.



In a quiet moment, artist Ed Stitt enjoyed a spin with his wife, Zoe.

PHOTOS COURTESY FRIENDS OF FENWAY STUDIOS

The Arts

Tiffani Faison's Tiger Mama Reemerges Downtown As Tigerbaby

BY CELINA COLBY

The maximalist Southeast Asian restaurant Tiger Mama was a Fenway favorite for nearly six years, and locals have lamented its loss since it closed in 2021. Now that spicy, dynamic menu is reborn at Tigerbaby, a spinoff concept that chef and owner Tiffani Faison opened at the High Street Place food hall in late February.

"Tigerbaby has lived in my brain and heart for quite some time. It's the food I love cooking and crave the most. I'm beyond excited to share it," says Faison.

Diners can expect flavorful but approachable dishes like basil chicken, black pepper beef and broccoli, and popcorn dumplings. On the beverage side expect everything from Thai tea and cold Vietnamese coffee (a highly caffeinated boon to local workers on deadline) to Lucky Buddha Beer.

"High Street Place has been lucky to have Tiffani as part of our community since day one, and Tigerbaby is a



Tigerbaby at High Street Place

perfect example of what makes this food hall special: chef-driven concepts with real personality and a loyal following," says Lauren Johnson, senior

marketplace manager at the food hall. "We can't wait for guests to experience what she's creating next."

Aside from its functionality as a takeout counter, Tigerbaby also has a different menu than its Fenway predecessor. Some crowd favorites will return, including a variation on the mala mushrooms. After 4 p.m. food lovers can order pad krapow gai and Singapore street noodles from a Tiger Originals special menu.

When Tiger Mama closed, Faison reimaged the space as Tenderoni's, a disco-driven, retro pizza parlor with a queer-friendly bent. But the Southeast Asian restaurant was a tough act to follow. Tenderoni's was only open for two years before shuttering, although the original location is still open

at High Street Place, which seems to have become a sweet spot for Faison's concepts. She's opened four other venues at the Financial District food hall: Tenderoni's, Bubble Bath, Charming Gardner, and Dive Bar.

The disco-ball-elephant host stand that was a hallmark of both Tiger Mama and Tenderoni's has found new life at Faison's swanky rooftop bar, Bubble Bath, in the Back Bay Lyrik complex. Faison still has a strong presence in the Fenway, where Sweet Cheeks continues to dish out trays of savory barbecue and petite cocktail bar Fool's Errand recently revamped its menu and started offering cocktail classes.

The 1363 Boylston St. spot where Tiger Mama once lived is still vacant, although workers have occasionally been spotted in the space. Earlier this year, the limited liability corporation that owned the Tiger Mama liquor license petitioned to have it transferred to Rosa y Marigold, a new Peruvian restaurant from the team behind Celeste and La Royal that's slated to open this spring at the Lyrik.

Even after five years, the new tenant will have big shoes to fill.

"It'll be bittersweet to say goodbye to Tiger Mama, and I'm so proud of what we've been able to accomplish," Faison wrote in a statement at the time of the restaurant's closing. "It goes without saying, Tiger Mama will always have a special place in my heart." And that place now has an address and a takeout menu downtown.

Celina Colby is a journalist and West Fens resident. She has been covering arts, culture and food in Boston for more than a decade.

Kaji Aso Haiku Entries Face April 6 Deadline

Kaji Aso Studio in the East Fens has opened its 2026 haiku contest. The annual competition has true global reach, with past winners hailing from four continents. It offers monetary prizes for the top three haiku and for the outstanding senryu, a related form of Japanese poetry.

Americans learn a simplified haiku format—three lines of 5-7-5 syllables—in primary school, but the form displays more extensive characteristics that can add layers of meaning (see haiku-poetry.org/what-is-haiku.html for an overview). Visit KajiAsoStudio.com/2026-haiku-contest for past winners approach. Use that same address to submit entries, at \$3 per poem, by April 6. Supporters of the competition include Mass Cultural Council, Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture, Boston Cultural Council, Mission Hill Fenway Neighborhood Trust, and the consulate general of Japan in Boston.

CITY of BOSTON

AFFORDABLE HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY IN THE FENWAY NEIGHBORHOOD

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BETWEEN \$199,314-\$416,707

APPLICATION DEADLINE APRIL 24 BY 5PM.

boston.gov/bostonhomes

INFORMATION SESSION: THURSDAY, APRIL 16 6 PM. REGISTER AT

bit.ly/43-hemenway-info

These units are deed-restricted; owner-occupancy requirements apply. Income and asset limitations apply. Requirements: First time homebuyer. Homebuyer will need to complete an approved homebuyer education course prior to closing. Preferences: Boston Residency preference. Preference for one (1) person per bedroom. Income limits for qualified buyers are 80% or 100% Area Median Income Limits based on HUD data that was refined and calculated by MHP and the City of Boston. Please note: Persons with disabilities and those with limited English language proficiency are entitled to request a reasonable accommodation.

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INSTITUTE FOR THE ARTS

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Concert:
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Sunday, February 15 | 3 pm

Group Exhibition: 'Existence'
ART • MUSIC • POETRY
Reception with the artists:
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THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

Expansion of Our Lady Of Perpetual Help School Shifts Into Higher Gear

IMAGE: SANDI GOLDFARB/RASKY PARTNERS



View of the future St. Alphonsus Street facade with new entrance and rooftop gym.

BY ALISON PULTINAS

The City’s Inspectional Services Department issued building permits in March for a real estate project in Mission Hill. The project expands Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) Grammar School at 94 St. Alphonsus St. into the Mission Church rectory next door at 1545 Tremont St. The first phase of what Principal Caroline Sliney called “our new school’s finding ways to make our dreams come true” includes accessibility improvements for rectory residents, enabling the changes that will connect the two buildings.

The 1903 rectory, designed by Franz Joseph Untersee, originally housed 40 Redemptorist priests. The new plan consolidates living space into the east wing to four long-term residential rooms and two short-term guest rooms; preserves the first-floor chapel and the two-story library on the upper floors; and adds

a new elevator and stairs.

The Landmarks Commission’s historic survey, completed in the 1980s, describes the rectory’s façade and design as the “most exuberant” of the Mission Church complex. It is granite, limestone, and brick in the polychromatic Queen Anne style. Built nearly 35 years after Mission Church’s founding by the German Redemptorist order, the Rectory reflects the parish’s prosperity and influence at the start of the 20th century.

In January 2025 the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) approved plans for the two-story addition that will be visible from Tremont Street. It required a BLC vote because the Redemptorist property is part of the Mission Church Complex, a designated city landmark. Attorney Marc LaCasse represented the Redemptorist Fathers at the hearing. There will

be some partial demolition but with the intention of salvaging historic elements. Architect Matthew Teismann, president of MKC Architects, designed the addition. A proviso with the Landmarks approval requested protection of the existing Priests Garden during construction.

OLPH (also called Mission Grammar) is Boston’s oldest Roman Catholic elementary school. Early-childhood classrooms are set up in the basement parish center of Mission Church, with enrollment available for children three months and older. The new space in the rectory will allow for increased capacity and room for art and dance studios. In the third phase of construction, a gymnasium is planned atop the current school

building.

On March 2, trustees and funders held a celebratory groundbreaking. Speakers included Mission Grammar alum and Provincial Leader of the Redemptorists Father John Collins, philanthropist Peter Lynch, school leaders Sliney and Ali Dutson, and former State Rep. Jeffrey Sanchez, an alumnus. In his role as a senior advisor with the public relations firm Rasky Partners, Sanchez helped kick-start the capital funding campaign (to donate, contact Dutson at adutson@missiongrammar.org). The school has passed the halfway mark toward a \$30 million goal for funding the expansion’s 49,000 square feet of renovation and new construction.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

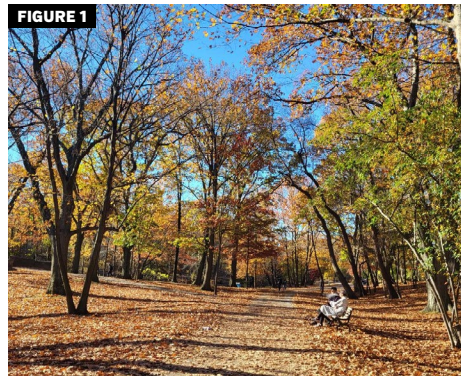
LETTERS

Protect Riverway Park from Landmark Place Shadows, Heights

Editor’s note: Landscape architect Elena Saporta, ASLA, submitted this letter to the Boston Civic Design Commission. She has long worked to improve the health of the Riverway and Back Bay Fens parks. Her local work includes the design of Ramler Park in the West Fens.

I am writing to support the continued vitality and viability of the Emerald Necklace Parks and to champion the ongoing need for park users to have access to sunlight!

The photo in Figure 1 was taken on November 8th at 8:45 am in the magnificent Riverway section of the Emerald Necklace. People were strolling and walking their dogs. They were walking to work, jogging, and cycling. Also, two friends were basking



in the early morning sunshine. If the Longwood Place project proceeds in its current configuration, this section of the park would be in shadow on this date as well as for close to half the year.

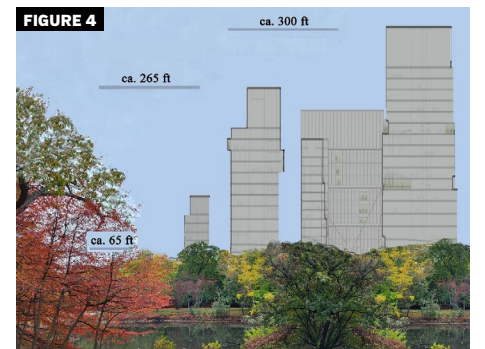
The Longwood Medical Area Design Guidelines recognized the priceless, irreplaceable value of the Emerald Necklace and called for no more than one hour of new shadow on the Necklace on the spring equinox. It is important to point out that the Longwood Place proposal casts 5.25 hours of new shadow on the parks (this is 5.25 times

what is called for in the LMA guidelines).

With 12 hours of daylight on March 21 and Sept. 21, the equinoxes, this constitutes close to half a day of new shadow! The diagram in Figure 2 is based on the aggregation of images taken from the 15-minute moving shadow study.

During the winter solstice when the access to sunlight is at a premium, there are 5.75 hours of new shadow cast on the Emerald Necklace parks, or 5.75 times more new shadow than called for in the LMA Guidelines. (Figure 3)

The proposed project would have a tremendous impact on both Boston and Brookline. The image in Figure 4 shows



Longwood Place viewed from the base of Brookline’s newly reconstructed Carlton Street bridge:

At last week’s two Longwood Place meetings, several suggestions were made regarding strategies to reduce the shadow impacts on the Emerald Necklace Parks. These include reducing the buildings’ heights, placing some of the programming below grade, and reducing the amount of on-site public/private open space.

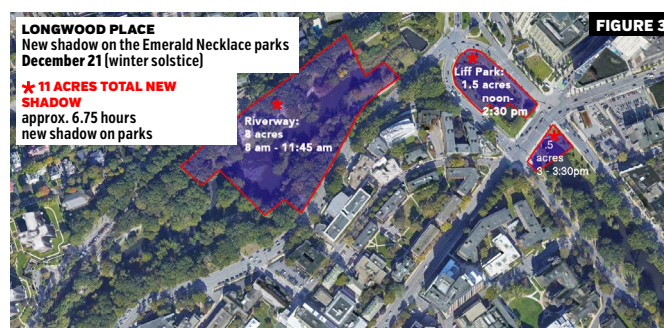
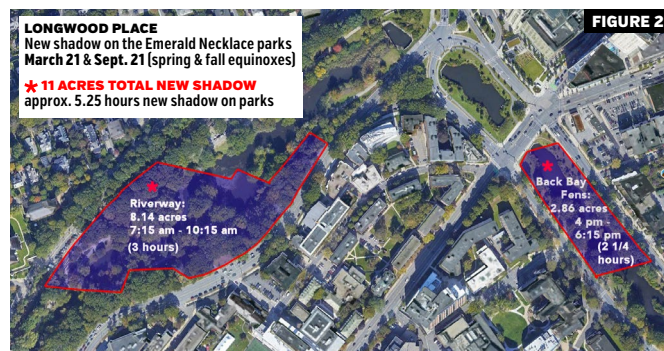
To these suggestions, I’d like to add the notion of reversing the positions of buildings and green space by placing the tallest structures along Brookline Avenue with major open space along the eastern edge of the site. Benefits of this diagrammatic reconfiguration: reduce shadow and visual

impacts on the Emerald Necklace and new open space shielded and protected from the noise and traffic of Brookline Avenue.

Currently, the Boston Common and Public Garden are the only Emerald Necklace parks that benefit from shadow protection.

Thank you in advance for doing whatever you can to safeguard the priceless legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted’s world-renowned, highly revered Emerald Necklace park system!

Sincerely,
Elena Saporta, ASLA, RLA, LEED AP



April CALENDAR

Now ☞ Sun, 5/31

HARVARD STAFF ART SHOW: LONGWOOD. Open to the public on weekends (ID required). Sat 10am–4pm and Sun 12–5pm. Countway Library, 695 Huntington Ave. **FREE**

Now ☞ Sat, 4/18

WORLD PREMIERE: WHEN PLAYWRIGHTS KILL. A cast of Tony-winning and -nominated performers present the comic story of a Broadway try-out (in Boston) torpedoed by the demands of its famously difficult leading lady. Inspired by true events. Tue–Thu 7pm; Fri–Sat, 7:30pm; Sat–Sun, 2pm. Tickets \$29–199. At Huntington Theatre. Details and tickets at whenplaywrightskillboston.com/

Sat, 4/4

MISSION HILL WOMEN WRITERS GROUP ANNUAL ANTHOLOGY READING EVENT. 1pm. Parker Hill Branch of the Boston Public Library, 1497 Tremont St. **FREE**

Tues, 4/7

Colleges of the Fenway Center for Sustainability and the Environment and the Muddy River Restoration Project Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee for the **20TH ANNUAL MUDDY RIVER SYMPOSIUM.** Featuring sustainability-focused research posters from across the Colleges and a keynote address, “Love that Dirty Water: We can have a swimmable Charles, but we need to ‘Cut the Crap,’” by Emily Norton, executive director of the Charles River Watershed Association. Register at calendar.colleges-fenway.org/event/muddy-river-symposium. 5:30–8:30pm, Paresky Conference Center, Simmons University, 300 The Fenway. **FREE**

Thu, 4/9

Fenway Forward hosts a **STATE HOUSE ADVOCACY 101 WORKSHOP** focused on building the knowledge and skills needed to advocate for issues you care about. Dinner provided. Contact lruizsanchez@fenwayforward.org for more information.

6–7:30pm, Fenway Community Center, 1282 Boylston St. **FREE**

Fri, 4/10 & Sun, 4/12

Handel & Haydn Society greets spring with “the magnificence of Handel’s *Water Music*,” and Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto No. 1. Special appearance by the H+H Festival Chorale. Symphony Hall. Fri 4/10, 7:30pm, \$15–126. Sun, 4/12, 3pm, \$15–151. Info and tickets at handelandhaydn.org/

Sun, 4/12

The Fenway Community Center hosts **PAINT & SIP WITH LYDIA JANE: PAINT A BOUQUET.** Tickets include two mimosas, snacks, and painting supplies. Visit eventbrite.com/e/paint-sip-with-lydia-jane-tickets-1983552507947 for tickets and info. \$45–\$50. 10am–1pm. 1282 Boylston St.

Tue, 4/ 22

The Back Bay Neighborhood Association’s Green Committee invites you to **GEOTHERMAL NETWORKS: A PATH TO FOSSIL FUEL FREEDOM**, a public forum and tabling event for Earth Day 2026. Panelists from local climate-action groups will speak about the latest geothermal advances. Register at bpl.libcal.com/event/16320952. Central Branch, Boston Public Library, 700 Boylston St., Rabb Hall. 5–7:30pm. **FREE**

Sat, 4/25

- Join the Emerald Necklace Conservancy for a **MUDDY RIVER CLEANUP.** Details and registration at emeralnecklace.org/volunteer/muddy-river-cleanup. 10am.
- FIXIT CLINIC JUNIOR.** Free workshop where volunteer Fixit Coaches share their tools, and know-how to troubleshoot and (hopefully) repair borken things—from bikes to blenders to blazers. Builds hands-on skills, confidence, community, and a culture of reuse and repair. For ages 6–12. 2–4pm, Central Branch, Boston Public Library, 700 Boylston St., second floor, Children’s Library. Learn more at boston.gov/calendar/fixit-clinic-junior-bpl-central-branch. **FREE**