

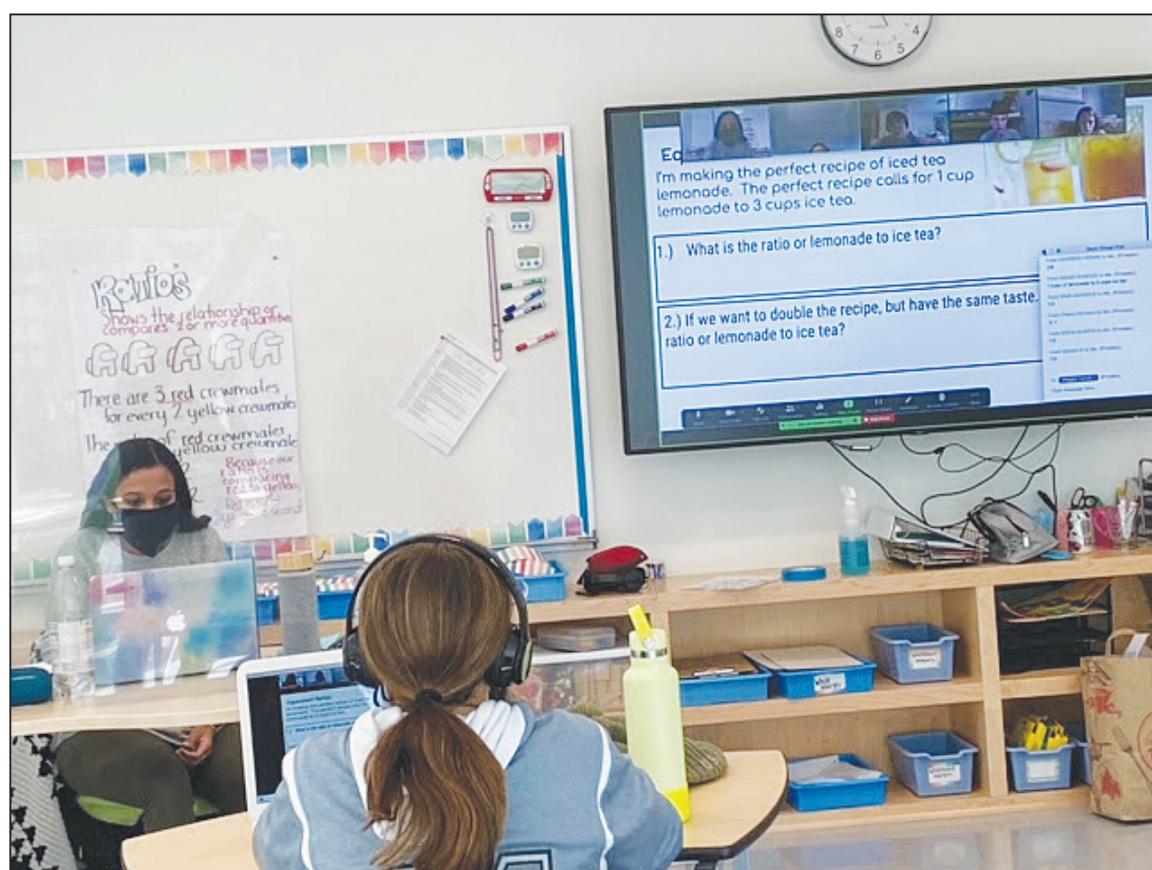


THE NORTH END

REGIONAL REVIEW

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Eliot School sixth graders were fully engaged in math at school simultaneously with their peers at home. The Eliot welcomed back in-person priority students on Tuesday, January 5 to all three school buildings in the North End.

In-person learning resumes at the Eliot for some students

By John Lynds

Last month Mayor Martin Walsh and Boston Public School Superintendent Dr. Brenda Cassellius announced that approximately 1,700 students across 28 schools, including East Boston High School and the Mario Umana Academy, returned to in-person learning on Monday.

The students returning to school this week have complex disabilities and language needs and were identified by BPS as having a high priority for in-person learning.

“After the return three weeks

ago of students to our special education-focused schools we returned the next group of students on Monday, December 14,” said Cassellius. “We are communicating directly with those families in collaboration with their school leaders to outline next steps. This group includes approximately 1,700 students across 28 schools. These plans are based on families who selected hybrid learning for their students and on each building’s ability to welcome students and staff back to in-person learning. We will add free-standing air purifiers into the school buildings

without HVAC systems to promote airflow.”

On Tuesday, all three Eliot school buildings in the North End welcomed in-person priority students back to school.

Eliot Principal Traci Griffith said she and her staff were thrilled to be one of the 28 Schools that were identified to proceed with limited in person learning for high priority students.

“We are so grateful for everyone’s continued commitment to supporting your student and our

(ELIOT, Pg. 3)

COVID Grip Tightens

Walsh announces city will remain in Step Two, Phase Two of reopening plan for “at least” three more weeks

By Lauren Bennett

Mayor Martin Walsh announced on Tuesday that Boston will remain in Step Two, Phase Two of the state’s reopening process for “at least another three weeks,” until January 27.

Walsh said that as of Monday, Boston had 431 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 and two more people had died from the virus. The current community positivity rate is 8.8 percent, which he said was up from last week.

Walsh called the rise in cases “concerning,” adding that hospital rates are also rising. He said that 93 percent of non-surge adult ICU beds in the city are currently occupied, which is the “highest we’ve seen in quite some time.”

Walsh said that “this is one of

the most serious points in the pandemic so far,” and if the positive cases do not go down, “we will need to look at more restrictions.”

Walsh originally announced in mid-December that the city would “temporarily” revert to Phase Two, Step Two to help slow the spread of the virus and ensure hospitals would be able to adequately care for patients.

Boston will now remain in this phase until January 27, after which the public health data will be reevaluated. The restrictions include a 10 person limit on indoor gatherings and a 25 person limit on outdoor gatherings, both in public and private spaces.

Activities and businesses to remain closed include gyms,

(WALSH, Pg. 2)

North End COVID update

By John Lynds

Last week the cumulative COVID-19 positive test rate in the North End and the surrounding neighborhoods dropped but the weekly positive test rate rose slightly.

According to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) last Friday, overall 36,974 North End, Beacon Hill, Back Bay, West End and Downtown residents have been tested for COVID-19 and the data shows that 4.6 percent of those tested were COVID positive—a 54.4 percent decrease from the 10.1 percent two weeks ago.

Last week 3,967 residents were tested and 3.6 were positive—a 9 percent increase from the 3.3 reported two Fridays ago.

Citywide, 8.8 percent were found to be COVID positive last week.

“The average number of positive tests each day for Boston residents was 413,” said Mayor Martin Walsh at a press briefing Tuesday. “That’s up slightly compared to the week before. Our current community positivity rate was 8.8 percent. That is up from the week before. Our case numbers are concerning, and our hospital numbers are higher than we’d like.”

The Mayor said that 93% of adult Non-Surge ICU Beds are occupied, the highest Boston has seen in a long time. The Mayor said that he and his team are in constant contact with local hospitals, and that he needs everyone to

(COVID, Pg. 5)

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NEMPAC presents first concert of 2021 from the Boston Athenaeum

The North End Music & Performing Arts Center (NEMPAC) is thrilled to announce “New Music from New England” featuring Hub New Music and Christina Wright-Ivanova —as part of NEMPAC’s Winter Concert Series— on Friday, January 15th, 2021 at 7 p.m. presented virtually in partnership with Sparrow Live from the historic Boston Athenaeum livestreamed directly to the comfort of your home.

The program will feature the contemporary works of living composers —originally from New England— full of vivid, vibrant, and emotional imagery depicting very relevant themes in today’s world including “Apple Fantasy” (World Premiere) by Joseph Sowa; “Rogue Emoji” by Kati Agócs; “Black Anemones” (flute and piano) by Joseph Schwantner; and “Crossings” (flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano) by Pierre Jalbert.

Featured Performers will include Michael Avitabile (flute),

Nicholas Brown (clarinet), Alyssa Wang (violin), Jesse Christeson (cello), and Christina Wright-Ivanova, (Artistic Director and piano guest artist).

About NEMPAC:

North End Music & Performing Arts Center (NEMPAC) is a 501(c)(3) community music school and performing arts center empowering greater-Boston artists of all ages and abilities. Fueled by the belief that the arts are an expression of our shared humanity, NEMPAC enriches the North End, Charlestown, and surrounding Boston neighborhoods with affordable, high-quality performances and programming.

In 2001, five North End mothers launched NEMPAC out of their homes to give their daughters and sons the opportunity to pursue private piano instruction. By listening to, empathizing with, and meeting a community need for youth instrument lessons, the nonprofit’s female founders band-

ed together to make music an approachable art form for the children of Little Italy.

Fast forward nearly two decades later, and NEMPAC continues to flourish at the intersection of arts education and professional performance. NEMPAC’s community music school nurtures the next generation of artists through in-house education courses, private and group music instruction, as well as on-site arts programming in area schools.

Social Media:

Follow us on social media for real-time coverage at professional performances, music school updates, and content curated especially for artists:

Facebook: @NEMPACBoston

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LinkedIn: North End Music & Performing Arts Center (NEMPAC)

WALSH (from pg. 1)

indoor fitness centers, museums, aquariums, and indoor gaming and arcades, among others. One on one training sessions may continue, Walsh said, and indoor recreational and athletic youth activities may continue with a 10 person limit for those 18 and under.

The state’s additional restrictions that went into effect on December 26 also still apply, the mayor said. This includes office space at 25 percent capacity, indoor dining at 25 percent capacity with a 90 minute time limit, and places of worship at 25 percent capacity. Bar seating is not allowed in Boston without written permission from the Licensing Board. For the complete list of restrictions, visit boston.gov/reopening.

Walsh reiterated that these restrictions are “not about targeting specific sectors as a cause of the virus spread,” but the goal is to limit spread and reduce the amount of time people spend outside of their homes with others. “If metrics get worse we might have to implement further restrictions,” Walsh said.

He also talked about safe dining and thanked Boston’s restaurants “for following the safety

protocols,” but added that “we need patrons to do their part.”

He said that “too many people are going out to dinner with people outside of their bubble,” and said that people should not “table hop” if they see someone they know in a restaurant. People should also keep their masks on when they are seated at their table and not actively eating or drinking.

“We need to keep local restaurants open, but only if people follow the public health guidelines,” Walsh said.

He also said that everyone should be getting tested for the virus, as the state has more than 30 testing sites. “We’re asking you to make it a New Year’s resolution,” he said.

Walsh also said that he will be delivering his annual State of the City address next week, but this year it will be “completely virtual.” The event will be on January 12 at 7L30pm, and will be livestreamed on boston.gov, as well as TV news stations.

“2020 was one of the hardest years in Boston’s history,” Walsh said, and thanked “everyone for doing their part.”

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Irviene Goldson, longtime ABCD health advocate, dies

By John Lynds

Friends, family and colleagues of Irviene Goldson said to know her was to love her.

Sadly, Mrs. Goldson, who served as deputy director of Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) Health Services, died suddenly last week.

Mrs. Goldson joined ABCD in 1992 as manager of education and training and rose to become deputy director of ABCD Health Services department and a powerhouse of healthcare advocacy in Boston.

"It is with the deepest sadness that I share that Irviene Goldson passed away suddenly," said EBCD President and CEO John Drew in a statement announcing her passing. "Her rare leadership and unflagging commitment to the Boston community made her not only respected but beloved."

Drew said with more than 30

years' experience in health education and training, and curriculum and program development, Mrs. Goldson was a trailblazer, teacher, and tireless advocate who saw health equity as a human right.

"With a passion for reproductive health, HIV and adolescent sexuality, she was an innovator who championed the inextricable link between equal access to health information, education, and care to personal development and empowerment," said Drew. "Frequently recognized for her work with under-resourced people of color, particularly girls and young women, Irviene was a woman of vision, determination, and action. We at ABCD mourn her loss as a dear friend and colleague, and we grieve alongside all those who knew her and loved her. Her heart was immense, her impact immeasurable. We will miss her always."

Former ABCD Health Services Director Joan Whitaker, who

worked closely with Mrs. Goldson for so many years, said Mrs. Goldson was always a champion of women's and community health.

"From the 1980s when Irviene was part of the founding of the Cambridge Feminist Health Center, she has championed women's and community health," said Whitaker, who retired in June. "She has exemplified empowerment for young people and community building by developing creative programs that have been key to alleviating health inequities. With compassion and wisdom, she has mentored and provided opportunities for countless young women of color. I will miss her kindness, her warmth, and the focused advocacy that have benefited me over the 27 years we worked together at ABCD."

Current ABCD Health Services Director Jessica Aguilera-Steinert added, "Irviene changed the lives of many young people in Boston

and beyond. Young black and brown girls, women and men were her family, her joy and her purpose. She was a fierce advocate and had a lifelong commitment to educating and agitating around sexual health, reproductive justice and health equity. She taught us to be brave and to advocate for others. As one colleague said 'she walked in her purpose.' At ABCD, Irviene was a force to be reckoned with. While working in the Health Services department as the Deputy Director of Community Prevention Programs for 27 years, she developed and led programs in reproductive health, HIV and STI prevention, sexual health and girls leadership and empowerment. Irviene believed and fought for



Irviene Goldson, longtime ABCD health advocate, died suddenly last week.

justice and we will continue to fight in her memory."

ELIOT (from pg. 1)

community this school year," said Eliot Principal Traci Griffith. "We have the most spectacular staff, fantastic families and super students who have been working so hard during these unprecedented times. We will continue to update families regarding the next phase of reopening in the coming weeks. We are stronger together."

Griffith said she is proud of the Eliot School community staff and all the hard work and effort they have all put forth to make this school year the best during an unprecedented time in education

"You have all been innova-

tive, imaginative and inspirational as we continue to transform education one Zoom at a time," she said. "We are eternally grateful for everyone embracing a growth mindset with flexibility and patience at the forefront. We continue to keep the health and

safety of our children, families and faculty at the center of our decisions to ensure access to high quality instruction for every Eliot learner. We will also continue to celebrate our guiding principles of Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Safe, Be Kind and Be Inclusive."

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A SHORT STORY ABOUT A MOTORCYCLE AND A SUDDEN TURN.

When she was a young college student, Elisabeth Marra had a serious motorcycle accident that ultimately changed her life. Two years after the crash, her painful open fractures had failed to heal. Then she heard about a new and complex surgery pioneered by a surgeon who used a patient's own stem cells to concentrate the healing process. This time, her surgery and subsequent therapy were successful.

Elisabeth's experience caused her to redirect her own career aspirations. Inspired by the medical professionals who helped her reclaim her active lifestyle, she changed her major to study physical therapy—a profession where her own experience could help other patients prevail through difficult recoveries.

We tell Elisabeth Marra's story here to illustrate two of the most profound messages we know. Don't give up, and remember to give back. If reading it inspires just one more person to achieve something special, then its telling here has been well worth while.



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EDITORIAL

EMISSIONS BILL IS A BIG STEP FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The approval on Monday by both houses of the Massachusetts legislature of a bill that requires the state to reduce its carbon emissions by at least 85% below 1990 levels by 2050 represents a huge step toward the goal of mitigating the effects of climate change in our state.

Although the total carbon emissions emanating from Massachusetts obviously is only a small fraction of global emissions, the legislation provides a blueprint for other states and private industry to follow.

Some say that the ultimate goal of net-zero by 2050 is unattainable, but in our view, that is understating the reality of what is happening in the world today.

Despite the best (or worst) efforts of the Trump administration to perpetuate the use of coal and other fossil fuels, renewable energy actually is cheaper than fossil fuels thanks to the advances in technology of wind and solar energy.

Most excitingly, the progress in the development of hydrogen fuel cells, which has been more than two decades in the making, finally is beginning to look like it will become a feasible source of energy within 10 years, making the goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 more than just a dream.

We applaud the action by Gov. Charlie Baker and our legislature in bringing to fruition an environmental action plan that recognizes the pressing need to address the issue of climate change.

Although the pandemic rightly is in the forefront of government leaders' attention today, that problem will seem like a stroll in the park if we do not take immediate action to avert the looming climate catastrophe that threatens our planet's very existence.

IT WAS A GREAT RUN, PATS' FANS

The 2020 season for the New England Patriots came to a merciful close this past weekend. The woeful Pats finished with a 7-9 record, their first losing season since 2000, and missed the playoffs for the first time since 2008.

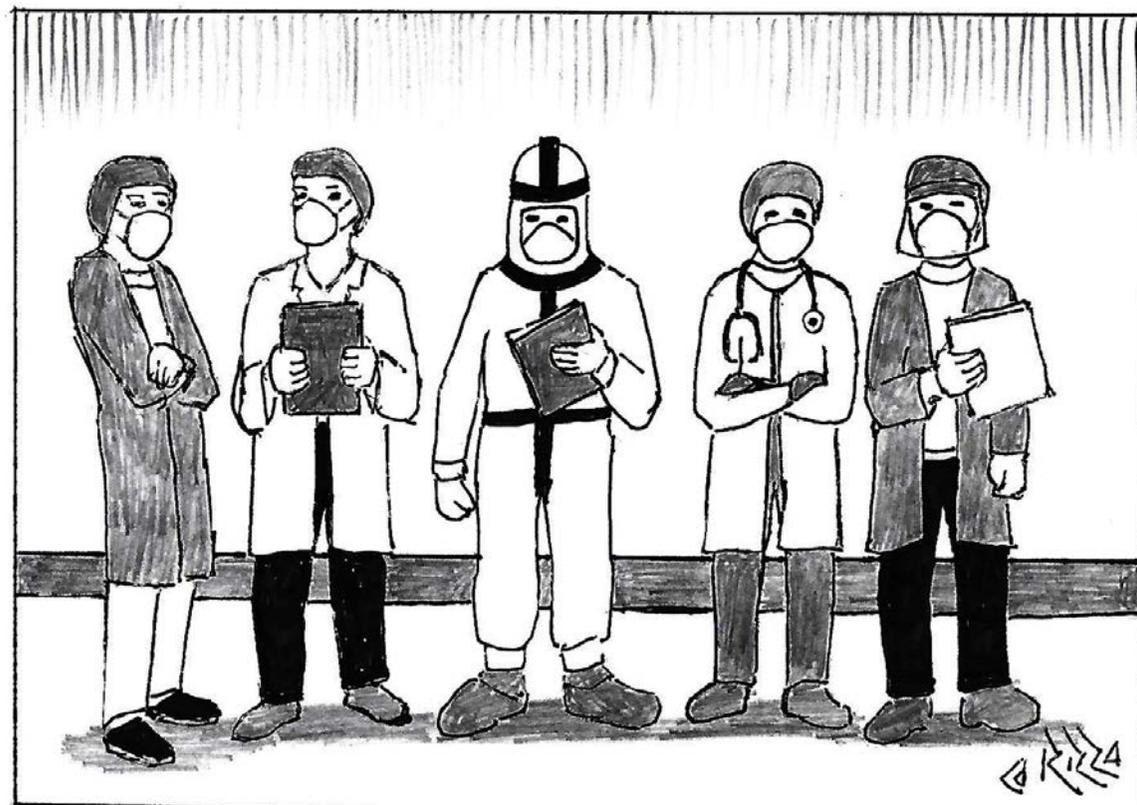
We have to admit that we feel badly for young Patriots' fans, those born after 1990, who have become accustomed to the dominance and excellence, year-after-year, by Bill Belichick's crew. This season has been the equivalent of having an ice bucket thrown over your head, a rude wake-up call to the reality of the ebb-and-flow of professional sports that the Patriots alone among all sports franchises in the modern era have managed to avoid for an unprecedented two decades.

Admittedly, even for those of us who are long-time Pats' fans who can recall all of the decades of ignominy, from Braves Field to Fenway Park to Harvard Stadium and then to Schaefer Stadium, the relegation of the Patriots to the bottom tier of the NFL this season, in which Foxboro and Gillette Stadium no longer were the epicenter of the football universe, was jarring.

So let's be grateful for the two decades of fun that Bob Kraft and his team brought our way.

But as the proverb says, all things must come to an end -- and so they have for our Patriots.

It was a nice ride -- and those championship banners always will be there to remind us of the good times.



NOTHING FINER THAN A FRONTLINER

GUEST OP-ED

What six dollars can do

Dr. Glenn Mollette

When I was sixteen years old, I was invited to speak at a little country church in rural Denver Kentucky, not far from Paintsville.

The church had all but closed its doors but one man, Harold Rice, and his family wanted to see the church stay open and do well.

A church with few to almost no people typically does not attract too many interested ministers. I had spoken in my home church a few times and was a guest speaker in a few others. Mr. Rice asked if I would consider speaking at the church on the second and fourth Sunday afternoons at 2:00. I agreed, and brought a message to maybe seven or eight people my first Sunday. The crowd consisted of Harold and his wife June Rice and their family. The church was an old building with a pump organ and a sign behind the pulpit that said, "Preach the Word."

I stayed with the little congregation called Liberty Baptist Church throughout high school. By the time I was seventeen Mr. Rice was talking to me about being the official pastor and about ordination. In time I would become the pastor and would be ordained. I was too young, too inexperienced and unskilled for such a responsibility but youth is adventurous and will try what those of us who know

better would never consider.

The church grew and we started having 20 to 30 people and often more. People literally received Christ, joined the church and were baptized. This was all amazing.

Even more amazing was Mr. Rice offered me a grand salary of \$60 a month to help buy my gasoline. The trip one way from home was over 30 miles so this was appreciated. He also presented me with paperwork for a perk. The church was going to put 10 percent or \$6 of my salary into the church denominational retirement plan, then known as The Annuity Board. It's called Guidestone today. He had me to complete a form solidifying my agreement to this monthly contribution. I was about seventeen at this stage and had zero interest or thoughts about retirement. Six dollars a month kind of seemed like a joke.

I was with Liberty church a couple of years or more and about ten to twelve of those months Mr. Rice made that \$6 contribution to my retirement faithfully. Although, I never thought another day about it from the moment I signed those papers.

Seven or eight years ago I did wonder if that account even existed. I called up The Guidestone retirement people and with my Social Security number they

told me in a few seconds that the account did indeed exist and my balance was \$31,000. Shocked would not describe how I felt. I almost had to pick myself off the floor. If Mr. Rice had made as many as 12 contributions the total invested would have been \$72. Now, years later I was looking at over \$31,000. Since that day of first inquiring that little \$6 account now has over \$46,000 and still growing.

The point of all this is save some money when you can. Start as young as possible but even if you are old put something away every month. If you can save hundreds every month that is wonderful, please do. However, don't ever underestimate the growth potential of saving a little bit of money every month, even if it's just \$6. And yes, every time I look at that account, I remember Mr. Rice and the good people of Liberty Baptist Church who not only encouraged me then but are still encouraging me today with just \$6.

Glenn Mollette is the publisher of *Newburgh Press*, *Liberty Torch* and various other publishing imprints; a national columnist — *American Issues and Common Sense* opinions, analysis, stories and features appear each week in over 500 newspapers, websites and blogs across the United States.

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North Washington Street Bridge construction look-ahead through January 9

VIBRATORY HAMMER NOISE IMPACTS

•A vibratory hammer is being used to install the five cofferdams which will be needed to build the piers of the new bridge. Installation of each cofferdam takes about two weeks.

•The project has positioned a combination of hanging sound blankets and temporary barrier to minimize noise impacts from the vibratory hammer. These measures will be adjusted as needed and appropriate.

•Use of the vibratory hammer began on 10/6. Work hours are during the day (7 a.m. – 3 p.m.)

DESCRIPTION OF SCHEDULED WORK

•Chip out bridge joints on the warehouse spans adjacent to Constitution Marina, installation and maintenance of silt curtain, installation of north and south abutment elements, installation of drilled shafts, and excavation of piers. In addition, sheeting and bracing of cofferdams will continue.

WORK HOURS

•Most work will be done during the daytime (6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

WORK THAT HAS BEEN COMPLETED

•Prior to 12/27, crews continued to demolish the existing bridge. The

bridge is now 100% demolished, and cofferdam work is 70% complete.

TRAVEL TIPS

Westerly sidewalk, Lovejoy Wharf stairs near Converse are open to the public with the opening of the temporary bridge, the adjacent section of the Harborwalk passing under the bridge remains closed.

The Tudor Wharf Walkway (under the bridge next to the water in Paul Revere Park) will be intermittently closed for safety during construction operations, with access provided via the Water Street underpass.

COVID (from pg. 1)

do their part.

“This is one of the most serious points of the pandemic so far and if numbers don’t improve, we’ll have to look at more restrictions. So everyone needs to wear a mask, avoid crowds, and stay six feet apart,” said Walsh. “Every time you do these things, you could be saving a life. We will beat this thing, if everyone buckles down.”

The Mayor also discussed the need for personal safety while indoor dining. He said that the City of Boston continues to monitor the data closely and limit indoor dining capacity to levels the public health experts say are safe.

He thanked local restaurants for following safety protocols, saying that they have been very cooperative. The City continues to support them with small business relief funds, technical support, and outdoor dining programs, and making it easier for them to offer safe pick-up and delivery.

But, the Mayor said, he needs patrons to do their part, too.

The Mayor said local contact tracing efforts make it clear that even though indoor dining itself isn’t a high risk factor, too many people are going out to dinner with people outside their bubbles, increasing the risk for COVID-19 transmission. He said that sometimes they see other people they know and “table hop,” which has to stop.

“We can keep local restaurants open... but only if people follow the public health guidance,” said Walsh. “So, if you’re indoor dining: only go with people in your bubble; keep your mask on when you’re not eating; and don’t mingle with other tables. It’s not just about your safety... It’s about our hardworking waiters and waitresses, hosts, and busboys who are working hard so that you can have a good time. Be respectful and help us spread the word about this.”

The infection rate in the North End and surrounding neighborhoods increased 7.5 percent in one week according to the latest city

statistics.

The BPHC data released last Friday showed North End, Beacon Hill, Back Bay, West End and Downtown had an infection rate of 321.9 cases per 10,000 residents, up from 299.3 cases per 10,000 residents.

One hundred twenty-six additional residents became infected with the virus last week and the total number of cases in the area increased from 1,668 cases to 1,794 cases as of last Friday.

The statistics released by the BPHC as part of its weekly COVID19 report breaks down the number of cases and infection rates in each neighborhood. It also breaks down the number of cases by age, gender and race.

Citywide positive cases of coronavirus increased 8.5 percent last week and went from 38,872 cases to 42,195 confirmed cases in a week. Thirty-seven more Boston residents died from the virus and there are now 1,025 total deaths in the city from COVID.

WEDDING NUPTIALS



Roseann Ruzzo from the North End married Jon Oliver on November 13. Best of luck in your new home and looking forward to celebrating this happy occasion.

Best wishes for your future together, from your mother, Olympia Ruzzo, Auntie Phyllis and Cousin Paula.

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Mayor Martin J. Walsh

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COVID-19 vaccines arrive; state launches phased vaccination plan and Dashboard

By John Lynds

The new COVID-19 vaccines arrived in Massachusetts just before Christmas for clinical and non-clinical health care workers doing direct and COVID-facing care.

While staff at clinics across Massachusetts have been vaccinated, North End Waterfront Health (NEW Health) Medical Director Dr. John Foster said while many patients are understandably anxious to get the new COVID vaccine as soon as possible most people will have to remain patient.

“Because of limited initial supplies of vaccine, there is a highly structured and regulated process that will be followed, which prioritizes vaccines first for healthcare workers and residents of long-term care and congregate-living

facilities,” said Foster. “As such, the orderly distribution of vaccines will be controlled by large health system employers (such as hospitals) and health care management at long term care or congregate-living facilities.”

Foster said the staff of NEW Health has no role in ordering or distributing vaccines at this time, and it is likely that the next wave of vaccines for essential personnel such as police, firefighters, etc. will not be getting vaccine until early 2021.

“The general public will be vaccinated in the subsequent phase, likely based on medical risk status,” he said. “At that point, we anticipate that NEW Health will be actively involved in vaccinating patients. So this is all good news, but everyone will still need to follow the usual mitigation measures

well into 2021.”

Two weeks ago the Baker-Polito Administration launched a COVID-19 vaccine dashboard to update the public on vaccine distribution and progress on a weekly basis. The dashboard will be posted every Thursday by 5 p.m. and will include information on vaccine supply distribution, administration and other data. The new dashboard can be found on the mass.gov/covidvaccine website.

So far the state has vaccinated just over 35,000 during the first wave of vaccinations last week.

“This vaccination dashboard report builds on the state’s ongoing efforts to publicly report out data and will help track the state’s vaccination efforts for COVID-19,” said Gov. Charlie Baker. “Currently, the Commonwealth produces one of the most com-

prehensive public data reports on COVID-19 in the nation and includes detailed municipal-level data, information on contact tracing, COVID-19 clusters and more.”

The state will roll out vaccines during a three phase approach that will take place between now and April.

The first phase, which was kicked off last week, includes clinical and non-clinical health care workers doing direct and COVID-facing care. Most health care workers and first responders will be vaccinated at their place of employment. Individuals living and working in long term care will be vaccinated as part of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program.

Phase II will be between February and March 2021 and

will include individuals with two or more comorbid conditions with a high risk for COVID-19 complications; other workers including early education, K-12, transit, grocery, utility, food and agriculture, restaurant and cafe workers; employees across the food, beverages, agriculture, consumer goods retail, and foodservice sectors: meatpackers; sanitation, public works and public health workers, vaccine development workers, food pantry workers, Uber/Lyft/rideshare services/pharmacy delivery drivers, workers in the passenger ground transportation industry; water and wastewater utility staff; and adults 65 and over.

Starting in April the state anticipates the vaccine will be available to the general public once the higher risk groups in Phase I and II receive their vaccines.



Virtual Public Meeting

Flood Resilience Zoning Overlay District

Wednesday, January 13
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/CFRODJan13
Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864
Meeting ID: 161 062 3707

Friday, January 15
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/CFRODJan15
Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864
Meeting ID: 160 772 4427

Project Description:

Please join Boston Planning & Development planning and zoning staff for a virtual meeting to review the draft Coastal Flood Resilience Zoning Overlay, which will provide new zoning definitions, dimensional and use standards for development projects to promote resilient design and better prepare new and existing buildings for future coastal storms and sea level rise. The meeting will include a presentation of the draft zoning article and updates to existing zoning, followed by Q&A and comments.

The same presentation and content will be covered at the meetings on January 13th and 15th. We will take comments on the draft Resilience Zoning Overlay until Friday, February 12th.

Translation and interpretation services can be made available upon request by reaching out to chris.busch@boston.gov at least a week in advance of the meeting.

mail to: **Chris Busch**
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201
phone: 617.918.4451
email: chris.busch@boston.gov

Close of Comment Period:
2/12/2021

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

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FRESH AND LOCAL

Dining chair travel

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

With trips to far-flung destinations on the back burner for a while, we can still enjoy some “dining chair travel.” This approach takes armchair travel to the next level by stimulating more of your senses as you enjoy the food of your imaginary destination.

For many years this has been a favorite way to explore foodways we find interesting, but far too much effort to visit in person. We’ve developed a fun way to explore countries, regions, and cultures with friends.

First, think of friends who are open to learning about a place and its foodways and plan a day around exploring that topic. Typically, we would begin with someone suggesting a place, culture, beverage, or food they want to experience in context.

Next, comes research to learn more about the dining table destination. In the years we’ve been doing this, the resources for continuing education about food have expanded beyond library books and visits to shops for authentic ingredients, to free ebooks, travel, and cooking videos. We’ve also enjoyed the expansion of the cultural food scene in this area. Now we can find, for example, Thai, Indian, Ethiopian, and regional Chinese restaurants serving less Americanized food.

A Visit to Spain

For example, one virtual visit to

Spain found us planning a menu around paella. Even a complex dish like this is easier with more minds to read the how-to and hands to execute the steps.

On that particular day, our shopping trip took us to Formaggio Kitchen for their recommended Spanish wines, cheeses, cured meat, spices, and accouterments to add to the flavor of the experience. From there we visited New Deal Fish to pick up the seafood for our main course.

When wine, cheese, and cured meat is part of a foodway, we try to begin the day in the kitchen by pouring a glass of wine and setting up a serving board of goodies for nibbling while we work. (If it’s a culture without these items, we might start with the street food of the area. In some cases we make it, in others, we order takeout.)

In this instance, the other couple had a patio and grill. That made our main course more authentic by cooking it over glowing coals. The delicious pan of paella with its crusty bottom was placed in the center of the table where (in pre-COVID days) we all ate the section in front of us in proper Spanish communal fashion. We all shared what we’d learned about the dish, the wine, the cheese, and the flan we made for dessert over hours of table conversation.

Other Options

If cooking is not your passion, you can still learn about the food and beverages of a specific place



At Lucy Ethiopian Cafe, we shared a meal with friends using pieces of lovely injera bread to scoop up bits of food.

and choose a local restaurant to taste what appealed to you. If you are open about wanting to learn and it is a small family-owned and operated spot, you have built-in teachers.

On our first visit to Lucy Ethiopian Cafe near Symphony Hall in Boston, we ordered the food our

gracious host recommended and shared it with friends using pieces of lovely injera bread to pick up and bring bits of food to our mouths.

As the host came by to see if we were happy with his food, he told us about the cafe’s role as a social center for the local Ethiopian com-

munity and the role of coffee and cafes in his culture. It was a memorable afternoon of enjoyment and education.

Do you have a question or topic for Fresh & Local? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

COMMUNITY NEWS

WINTER HATS AND GLOVES DRIVE

North End Friends of St. Francis Houses collecting donations to purchase winter hats and gloves for the needy. For information call John Romano at 617-750-9749.

NEWNC MEETING

The next North End/Waterfront Neighborhood Council (NEWNC) monthly meeting will be held on Monday, January 11 at 7 p.m. It will be a virtual meeting.

FOOD PROGRAM DONATIONS

Donations are being accepted for the Food Insecurity Program at the NEW Health this holiday season. Over 100 families per month are served including children from the Eliot School. For details call 857-238-1176.

PUBLIC SKATING AT N.E. RINK

Public skating at the North End Steriti Rink on Commercial Street is now available at different hours. Schedule can be picked up at the rink.

STORIES OF THE OLD NORTH

Looking to the future, the Old North Foundation is aiming to create a site wide interpretation plan in 2021 that reflects the rich and diverse stories of the past.

MBTA POLICE OFFERING FACE MASKS

MBTA Transit Police have started offering face masks to transit riders in need of face covering.

TOUR LOCAL CENTER

For a tour of the North End Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, 70 Fulton Street, North End call 617-843-5001.

OLD NORTH SEEKS PROGRAM SPONSORS

The Old North Church Foundation of Boston, Inc., is seeking sponsors to continue to provide programs to students and teachers throughout the country, as they prepare for a mostly virtual 2020-2021 school year. This year, there is a need due to the pandemic and the foundation’s dependency on tourism revenue.

The Old North will shift to a virtual strategy with engaging content that combines a core history curriculum.

OBITUARIES

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District A-1 overall crime down 25-percent

By John Lynds

The Boston Police Department released its year end crime stats for District A-1, which includes the North End, and overall Part One Crime was down 25-percent for 2020.

Part One Crimes are the more serious crimes the Boston Police track and while there crimes were down when comparing Jan. 1, 2019 through Dec. 31, 2019 with the same time period this year, Larceny from Motor Vehicles was up nearly 40 percent.

In 2019 there were 210 motor vehicle larcenies but that number increased to 293 for 2020.

It seems the number of motor vehicle larcenies, an opportunistic crime that only takes seconds to pull off, is up all over Boston.

Citywide the number has gone from 2,713 in 2019 to 3,348 for 2020, a 23.4 percent increase.

The other major jump in crime was Commercial Burglaries,

which jumped 94 percent in 2020. Commercial Burglaries went from 66 in 2019 to 128 for 2020 but the increase can be traced back to some of the looting and rioting that occurred over a few nights in Downtown Crossing during the George Floyd demonstrations in Boston.

As for other Part One Crimes in District A-1 there were zero reported Homicides for 2020; Rape or Attempted Rape was down from 27 to 18; Robbery or Attempted Robbery was down from 157 to 122; Domestic Aggravated Assault was down from 26 to 23; Non-Domestic Aggravated Assault was down from 275 to 214; Residential Burglaries were down from 50 to 46; other Larcenies were down from 1,501 to 1,012; and Auto Theft was down from 93 to 72.

In 2020 there were a total of 1,928 Part One Crimes in District A-1, down from the 2,415 reported in 2019.

Baker signs police reform legislation

Gov. Charles Baker signed “An Act Relative to Justice, Equity and Accountability in Law Enforcement in the Commonwealth,” a controversial piece of legislation that creates a mandatory certification process for police officers, increases accountability and transparency in law enforcement and gives police departments a greater ability to hire or promote only qualified applicants.

“This bill is the product of bipartisan cooperation and thanks to the Black and Latino Caucus’ leadership on the hugely important issue of law enforcement accountability, Massachusetts will have one of the best laws in the nation,” said Baker. “Police officers have enormously difficult jobs and we are grateful they put their lives on the line every time they go to work. Thanks to final negotiations on this bill, police officers will have a system they can trust and our communities will be safer for it.”

Former Speaker Bob DeLeo added, “I am proud that the House lived up to its vow of listening to folks with lived experience in enacting one of the most comprehensive approaches to police reform in the United States since the tragic murder of George Floyd. My unyielding gratitude to Speaker Mariano and Chairs Cronin, Michlewitz and González for their persistent effort to improve our law enforcement system. I am confident that the House of Representatives will build on this achievement in the time ahead and am humbled that legislation which promotes fairness and equality are part of the House’s legacy.”

“I am grateful to the Governor and key leaders in the House and Senate for their wisdom in coming together to carry this bill across the finish line,” said Sen. William N. Brownsberger (D – Belmont). “I believe that within five years, the Commonwealth will be a significantly better place as a result of this legislation.”

“This law represents a mile-marker, not an end,” said Sen. Sonia Chang-Díaz (D – Boston). “Among the 50 states, it will create the first civilian-led police oversight board with subpoena power and decertification authority; it will ban chokeholds and limit no-knock warrants; it will create a duty-to-intervene for police officers and a duty to

de-escalate; it will ban racial profiling and put enforcement powers behind that ban; it will end the requirement of police officers in schools. But no one bill will dismantle structural racism—in policing, or in all the other places it exists. As much as we celebrate these hard-won steps forward today, we must equally resolve to keep walking the road of racial justice in 2021.”

“The members of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association are eager to turn the page on what has been an unprecedented and incredibly difficult and enduring year on so many different levels,” said Chief Edward A. Dunne, President of the Massachusetts Chief of Police Association. “We are extremely confident that this comprehensive legislation signed into law by the Governor today will serve to renew an elevated sense of faith, confidence, and trust that the residents of the Commonwealth will have in their law enforcement agencies across the state. The MCOPA fully realizes and wholeheartedly agrees that the general public deserves nothing less than the highest level of professionalism, accountability and transparency in their respective police departments and this legislation will assist in enhancing our long-standing position as what are viewed by many national experts as model police departments across the entire country.”

This legislation will, for the first time, create a mandatory certification process for police officers through the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST). The Commission, through a majority civilian board, will certify officers and create processes for decertification, suspension of certification, or reprimand in the event of certain misconduct. The nine-member commission will include six individuals from outside of law enforcement, and will also be responsible for investigating and adjudicating claims of misconduct, maintaining databases of training, certification, employment, and internal affairs records for all officers, and certifying law enforcement agencies. By creating a central entity to oversee officer certification, the Commission will ensure that those officers’ training and misconduct records are available both to the Commission and to those officers’ current

and future employers, improving accountability.

Gov. Baker amended the bill to strengthen its due process protections for law enforcement, added police labor representation on the commission, and strengthened the bill’s facial recognition provisions ensuring law enforcement agencies can continue to access these potentially lifesaving tools responsibly.

The new law identifies the general circumstances under which police officers can use physical force, and specifically bans the use of chokeholds and prohibits firing into a fleeing vehicle unless doing so is both necessary to prevent imminent harm and proportionate to that risk of harm. The bill also generally precludes officers from using rubber pellets, chemical weapons, or canine units against a crowd. Violations of any of these provisions may provide grounds for an officer to have their certification suspended or revoked.

The bill places strict limits on the use of so-called “no-knock” warrants, requiring such warrants to be issued by a judge and only in situations where an officer’s safety would be at risk if they announced their presence and only where there are no children or adults over the age of 65 in the home. The legislation provides for an exception when those children or older adults are themselves at risk of harm. In addition, the bill requires law enforcement to seek a court order when conducting a facial recognition search except in emergency situations.

The legislation includes key provisions of the State Police reform legislation the Administration filed in January that provide new tools to improve accountability and discipline within the Department and to enhance diversity in the Department’s recruitment and promotional practices. Those key provisions include establishing a State Police cadet program, enhancing the Colonel’s ability to address and correct misconduct, updating rules governing promotions of uniformed members to officer positions, removing the requirement that the Governor look exclusively within the State Police when appointing a colonel, and creating a new criminal offense for police officers who knowingly receive payment for a fraudulent claim of hours worked.

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