



CHARLESTOWN

PATRIOT-BRIDGE

BPDA to developers

We are taking diversity and inclusion seriously

By Seth Daniel

The Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) is sending a message this month to the development community and to residents that it plans to take a more serious approach to Diversity & Inclusion when evaluating proposals for City-owned parcels – and they have taken action on that warning already.

On Thursday, the BPDA Board will be set to re-issue RFPs for the Main Street EMS Station and the Building 108 Power Plant to re-start the process after rejecting responses earlier in the year due to inadequate plans for Diversity & Inclusion.

The BPDA's Devin Quirk and Project Manager Reay Pannesi said that the RFP processes that began earlier this year for the Main Street EMS facility and Building 108 Power Plant in the Navy Yard will be restarted due to inadequate plans for Diversity & Inclusion.

"We wanted to see a lot more detail and this RFP (on Main Street) fell into this category," said Quirk. "They didn't get into a lot of detail we wanted to see...It's not that the proposal was so bad, but that it lacked specifics. It had a good value statement, but that's not enough."

He said that Building 108, and also an RFP for parkland in the South End, fell into the same category as Main Street. The Main Street proposal was to work with a developer – who was the lone respondent – to build out a shell for a two-bay ambulance station on a proposed development site at the corner of Main Street and Bunker Hill Street. Already, a temporary ambulance station sits there, but by working with the developer, it was hoped a permanent structure could be built and turned over to Boston EMS. The long-awaited Building 108 had been tagged for parking or some other type of development on what is a very contaminated piece of former

(BPDA Pg. 3)



ONE IF BY LAND, AND TWO IF...BY THE NORTH WASHINGTON STREET BRIDGE? Following almost exactly the route of Paul Revere on his famous passage across the Charles River so long ago, a curious row-boater watches crews demolish the North Washington Street Bridge on Monday under the watchful eyes of the Bunker Hill Monument.

Bunker Hill Mall proposes housing, complete make-over of property

By Seth Daniel

The owners of the Bunker Hill Mall proposed a new, 240-unit residential building on vacant land abutting Rutherford Avenue, and a complete make-over of the current Mall property in a Letter of Intent filed this month with the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA).

There have been rumors and discussions for several months regarding the overall plans for the Mall, which features a large amount of unused surface parking and some dated facades along Main Street and in the interior of the Mall. This month, New England Development finally shared their initial ideas for the development.

The proposed program would create a 203,727 sq. ft. building on approximately 46,000 sq. ft. of vacant space on the southern edge of the current mall property near (and perhaps on) where the 99 Restaurant currently sits. That building would contain 240 units of housing, to include Compact

Living Units and tiered affordable units. That building would include residential amenities, surface/structured parking and landscaping improvements.

"We are excited to introduce a residential component to Bunker Hill Mall, a neighborhood shopping center that has provided services to the Charlestown community since 1978," said Michael Barelli, vice president of New England Development. "Our goal is to continue our longstanding commitment to Charlestown by providing a number of public benefits - including affordable housing, a significant endowment for community funding, and enhancements to neighborhood open space and the shopping center itself. We look forward to further public conversations as we shape our plan for 201 Rutherford."

The filing relayed that the project would transform the existing mall into a residential, transit-oriented gateway development along

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State rep. candidates face off in MassVote online forum

By Seth Daniel

State Rep. Dan Ryan and Chelsea Councilor and state representative candidate Damali Vidot faced off in one of the first debates of this strange and unique election season – and yet another unique piece was there was no stage.

Both candidates and Moderator J. Keith Motley, of UMass-Boston, participated remotely via Zoom in the MassVote-sponsored debate for the 2nd Suffolk District – which encompasses Charlestown and most of Chelsea.

Sitting in their homes debating the issues gave the event more of an informal appeal, but it didn't lack any seriousness in regards to the weight of issues debated. After the one-hour question-and-answer



State Rep. Dan Ryan speaking about housing issues during the MassVote debate.



Councilor Damali Vidot speaking about environmental justice issues during the MassVote debate.



The moderator of the online debate was UMass Boston's J. Keith Motley.

forum, Rep. Ryan came off as the polished and experienced state legislator who is accustomed to the system on Beacon Hill for

getting things done. Meanwhile, Councilor Vidot came off as someone with a new voice that would challenge the ways things are done

on Beacon Hill and would call to re-invent long-standing priorities

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EDITORIAL

AMERICA IS CIRCLING THE DRAIN

On January 30 -- what seems like a lifetime ago -- the World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 was a world-wide pandemic. On that same fateful date, the United States' Centers for Disease Control issued a press release that stated as follows: "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today confirmed that the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) has spread between two people in the United States, representing the first instance of person-to-person spread with this new virus here."

One month later, on February 29, after the first confirmed coronavirus death in this country, President Donald J. Trump said as follows:

"We've taken the most aggressive actions to confront the coronavirus. They are the most aggressive taken by any country and we're the number one travel destination anywhere in the world, yet we have far fewer cases of the disease than even countries with much less travel or a much smaller population."

Given Trump's reassuring statement, who among us could have imagined that five months later, the United States would rank as the nation that has been the most-ravaged by the virus? With more than 160,000 of our fellow Americans victims of the virus -- and increasing by 1000 per day -- we have recorded 25 percent of the world's deaths, though we have just four percent of the world's population. And our five million confirmed cases -- an increase of one million in the past 17 days alone -- account for almost one-quarter of cases world-wide.

The daily life of every American has been affected by the virus, with no end in sight. Not only has the fabric of our society been shredded, but the very foundation of our democracy -- the ability to hold fair and free elections -- is in serious jeopardy.

The virus has reduced us to the status of a banana republic in every respect -- and we're continuing to spiral ever downward, day-by-day.

CAR REPOSSESSIONS ARE ON THE RISE

Although most of the attention of the financial crisis brought about by the coronavirus pandemic has focused on the evictions and foreclosures facing millions of out-of-work Americans, the number of repossessions of motor vehicles because of loan defaults is starting to increase dramatically.

With the expiration of a ban on debt collection actions having ended in Massachusetts on July 31, lenders have begun to repossess the motor vehicles whose owners have defaulted on their loans.

We are not taking issue with the lenders -- who only are seeking to protect the value of the motor vehicle for which they have the title -- but we are mentioning it to point out that this is yet another side effect of our nation's feeble national response to the pandemic.

The loss of an automobile will have catastrophic consequences for many families. But the sad reality is that some policymakers in Washington obviously do not care.

GUEST OP-ED

Make your voice count in the 2020 Census

By Mayor Martin Walsh

The Census Bureau has abruptly decided to cut their national counting operations a month short. The last day to participate in the U.S. 2020 Federal Census is now September 30, formerly October 31.

This announcement further jeopardizes Congressional representation, redistricting, and critical federal funding for things like education, housing, food programs, and more in Boston's communities during the next 10 years. It could lead to a significant undercount, especially for renters, people of color, and immigrants. Only 53.5 percent of Boston's households have responded to date, with some neighborhoods lagging behind.

This is why I'm once again asking everyone to fill out the Census AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, if you haven't already. You can self-respond online (my2020census.gov), or by phone 844-330-2020, and these services are available in 13 different languages. A full list of language access hotlines can be found online. There's also a resourceful FAQ page for any questions you may have.

As a reminder, the Census Bureau will send staff to your house and attempt to assist your household in-person if you have not yet responded. The best way to avoid this visit (should you not want it) is to self-respond immediately.

It takes just a few minutes and, please remember, your responses are safe and confidential. You will not be asked about immigration status, and your answers will not affect any public benefits you receive.

If you are interested in getting more involved to help Boston achieve a complete count, you can help in two ways:

- Spread the message digitally. Use our outreach toolkit to share that responding is not only crucial, but it is also safe, easy, and confidential. In the toolkit you will find messaging, sample social media text and graphics, infographic flyers and guides, PSA videos, and additional resources. Much of the content is in six languages.

- Volunteer to census phone bank with the City of Boston. We are hosting daily phone banks to reach out and encourage households in some of our lowest response neighborhoods.

We want to make sure that everyone gets counted, because in Boston, everyone counts. This is a time to make your voices heard, own your power, fight for your city, and help keep Boston strong for years to come.

Martin Walsh is the Mayor of Boston.

GUEST OP-ED

Suffolk DA Rachael Rollins statement on bail and the bail fund

By DA Rachael Rollins

(The following statement is in regard to the release of a convicted sex offender and rapist in Dorchester through the efforts of the Massachusetts Bail Fund in July. Last week, the DA's office brought charges against the man for allegedly raping and kidnapping another woman shortly after

being bailed by the Massachusetts Bail Fund.)

To the Editor,

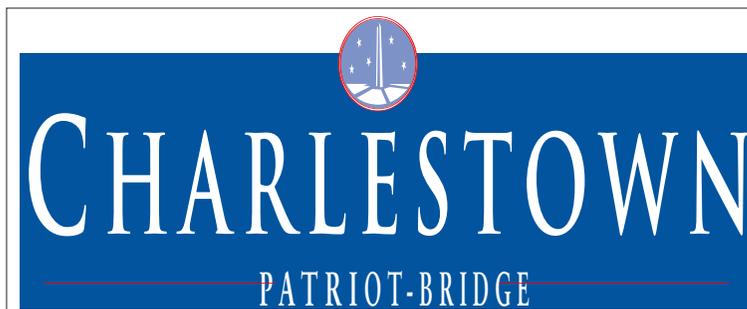
Each one of the over 25,000 cases we handle a year is unique and the Office examines many factors in determining how best to proceed in each case. The decision to request bail or move for dangerousness is one of many that requires a careful consideration of

what best serves the victim. And to be clear, the alleged rapist isn't the victim in the case. The person raped is.

Dangerousness under s. 58A requires an evidentiary hearing. There are important victim-centered reasons for not requesting such a hearing and instead requesting bail. Further, the dangerousness statute only allows defendants to be held without bail for a limited period of time, after which they are eligible for release on bail, and only permits prosecutors to request a dangerousness hearing during an arraignment.

What I find interesting about the Bail Fund's recent behavior of posting higher bails for violent serious crimes - like the alleged rape recently committed by a convicted sex offender and rapist - is that any incentive for good behavior by the alleged offender is removed. When a family member or friend posts bail, there is an added pressure on the defendant. Any violation, whether a new offense or not showing up in court, could result in that family member or friend losing their

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LETTERS to the Editor

SPECIAL WOMAN RUNNING FOR OFFICE: DAMALI VIDOT

To the Editor,

Recently as I was reading a narrative about women, and, especially women of color, who choose to run for public office, it became apparent to me, that there are a number of reasons women step up, and run for political positions.

The trajectory that influences a woman to seek a political office often follows a similar path. First, is the desire to advocate for help, especially after witnessing first-hand, many instances where efforts fall flat such as getting help for housing inequities, environmental injustices, food insecurities and a host of other serious issues plaguing vulnerable communities.

Next a woman, being consumed by roadblocks and that the problems continue to persist, her advocacy turns to activism. She is now authentically committed to resolving issues, which results in making noise and stepping up efforts to advocate for the voiceless, the marginalized and those who have no voice in the public policy process, especially when the political status quo affects folks for years to come. Given that existing leadership does not deliver, she must act.

Running for political office is a huge commitment and the decision to engage in this next step, is a natural transition for a woman committed to her values, her community and for the future of our children and the next generation.

As someone who has been on the sidelines quietly and sometimes, not, fighting for environmental and community concerns regarding quality of life issues,

I wholeheartedly embrace and recognize Damali Vidot as our next State Representative for Charlestown and Chelsea.

Some of the many accomplishments of Damali Vidot are profound and life changing. As President of the Chelsea City Council she passed the City's first inclusionary zoning ordinance to protect affordable housing.

Also, with a focus on environmental justice, Damali was instrumental in suing Exxon Mobil for polluting the Mystic River, as well as advocating against an Eversource sub-station in the midst of her neighborhood.

And throughout the pandemic crisis, Damali has fought for basic rights such as food, shelter, education and clean air and water.

Damali's mission is transparency in government, quality education, safe neighborhoods, housing, transportation, good jobs and a strong economy.

We in Charlestown have been plagued by pollution, traffic, more dense building in our one square mile, as well as high asthma rates.

We are in need of more green space. We need to ensure our needs are met. Quality of life is our priority. It is time for a change.

Damali, through her leadership, will listen to our needs, put our issues first, will work with us to change the status quo and will give us a sense of optimism.

The time for change is now and Charlestown will be better served by her leadership and commitment to addressing pressing issues-both during the pandemic and beyond it.

Please vote SEPTEMBER 1st. Please vote for CHANGE. Please vote for Damali Vidot

Ann Kelleher

OP-ED (from pg. 2)

money that was posted for bail. That's how the bail statute works. The Bail Fund isn't a friend or family member of the accused. There is no discussion on the ride home of 'what the hell are you doing?' or 'what in the world have you done?' There is no pressure applied to the accused by the Bail Fund. Rather, their mantra is 'Free Them All.'

If this office made a decision to request bail and not a dangerousness hearing to spare the victim of a rape any additional trauma, I can absolutely live with that decision. But bailing out a convicted sex offender and rapist, and then going home, is the act of a cow-

ard. So is not making a statement after you make a decision like that. The Bail Fund bailed out Shawn McClinton and he is now accused of raping someone else, in Boston. I would have so much more respect for the Bail Fund if they had bailed him out and then let him stay in one of their homes. Because that's what family members and friends usually do when they bail a loved one out. Not bail them out, set them loose on a community they don't live in, and drive back to the safety of their homes.

Rachael Rollins is the Suffolk County District Attorney.

Rest assured, there will be a school bus – but what an adventure it will be

By Seth Daniel

If the Boston Public Schools (BPS) end up going back in September with a hybrid, in-person model, the good news is the school buses will operate – including the always controversial buses from Charlestown to Boston Latin School and Boston Latin Academy.

However, any such bus ride to school this year will be an adventure full of safety protocols, strict bus monitors and a necessity for creative social distancing.

Last Wednesday, Aug. 5, BPS unveiled its plan for a flexible hybrid or remote choice for parents and students this fall, and while there are hundreds of intricate details, one major complicating factor is the school bus for elementary and middle school students. For the most part, high school students use the MBTA to get to school, and that won't change under the plan.

The hybrid, in-person model is being stressed as a very real possibility if the science backs it up and it is deemed safe by health experts, but many believe that in the coming days that could change.

For now, thinking about the school bus is every parent's chief concern, if they intend to use the service.

For Charlestown, one piece of good news under any in-person model is that the Boston Latin School and Boston Latin Academy buses for middle schoolers will not be cut out of the program – which is usually an annual fight right down to the last week of summer.

"BPS plans to continue assigning shuttle buses to accommodate the middle-grade students in Charlestown who attend Boston Latin Academy and Boston Latin School," said a spokesman.

Meanwhile, all buses will have a much different look. Because of social distancing, school buses will only be able to accommodate about 50 percent of their normal student population. That is one reason that full, in-person learn-

ing has been deemed impossible in September, but it will also be a challenge for any hybrid model that brings in only a portion of students to a school.

One of the challenges is safety, and the school bus plan now being proposed has a number of procedures in place that students will find much different.

"The safe transportation of students to and from school is a critical part of any plan that involves a return to in-person learning," said the spokesman. "BPS Transportation is adapting its transportation processes and procedures to prepare to effectively and safely transport our students to and from school under a range of scenarios this fall, while ensuring the health and safety of our students, drivers, and monitors."

Some of the precautions in the plan include:

- BPS is prepared to enforce social distancing on buses by assigning one monitor per bus and also assigning seats for students so that they are Students will be assigned to a specific seat on the bus.

- Students will be seated one per bench on the bus; as an exception, household members will be permitted to sit on the same bench. As a result of these seating limitations, each bus will transport approximately half of the usual capacity of students.

- Students who have complex health care needs and/or are mobility impaired will continue to receive transportation services through BPS yellow school buses. Bus drivers and monitors will be provided with training and additional personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of our students and staff during transport to and from school.

- If necessary, BPS is prepared to increase its walk zones for first to fifth grade students from 1 mile to 1.5 miles. Walk zones would stay the same as they have always been for sixth graders (1.5 miles) and pre-kindergarten and kindergarten (1 mile). While still

well below the state-allowed 2 mile zone, these expanded walk zones will decrease the numbers of students who require school bus transportation.

All students and staff who ride a BPS yellow school bus will be required to wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth. Masks must be in place prior to boarding the bus, stay in place throughout the ride, and remain on while exiting the bus. Students who arrive for bus pickup without a mask will be provided a disposable mask, but continued failures to bring a face covering will be reported to the school leader and addressed at the school level pursuant to the applicable Code of Conduct.

- Buses are being equipped with hand sanitation supplies, and all students will be expected to sanitize their hands before boarding a bus.

- The District is seeking to hire additional bus monitors so as to be able to assign one monitor to each bus in order to ensure masks are used properly and physical distancing is maintained.

- Monitors and drivers will wear appropriate PPE at all times.

- No one other than the driver, monitor(s), and students assigned to a bus may enter that bus. Family members are prohibited from entering buses.

- Buses will be sanitized every evening before the start of a new school day and between the morning and afternoon shifts in order to meet public health standards with regard to the cleanliness of each bus.

- Like all BPS staff, drivers and monitors will be required to complete a home health screening each day before reporting to work at a BPS bus yard.

The BPS plan for re-opening is due to the state this Friday, Aug. 14, in its entirety. BPS stressed this week that there are no final decisions yet made on whether they will be all-remote or have a hybrid, in-person option. That decision, they said, would be guided by public health information.

BPDA (from pg. 1)

Navy property. However, it too didn't show enough details about how it would include women and minority-owned businesses in the project.

"They had great value statements on it, but didn't show details," said Quirk. "This is a good time to tell the development community in Boston Diversity & Inclusion is very important and we want to see results. Value state-

ments aren't enough and we want detailed plans about outreach to women and minority businesses... You have to now actually show some results. The community needs to know we're advocating for them and the development community needs to know we're very serious about this."

Pannesi said they are happy to be moving forward on all three, and they expect the Board to approve

the RFPs. They also expect those that responded originally to once again submit responses, but the hope is there will be more thought given to Diversity & Inclusion on these publicly-owned lands.

Quirk said moving forward that Diversity & Inclusion plans would account for 25 percent of the evaluation of any sale of BPDA land.

BPDA to release RFP for development of challenging Pier 5

By Seth Daniel

Though it was delayed a few months due to COVID-19 complications, the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) will petition its Board Thursday night to issue an RFP for the development of Pier 5 – a challenging development that will require more than \$5 million just to demolish the condemned pier.

The Board is expected to approve the RFP after a community meeting with more than 100 in attendance showed support in the Navy Yard for some sort of

redevelopment of Pier 5 – which is now fenced off and inaccessible.

“The input we got was people were open to development on the Pier as long as it was informed by overall concerns like flooding and climate change and balanced with open space,” said Project Manager Morgan McDaniel. “That’s important to us as well and it’s reflected in the RFP.”

The BPDA’s Devin Quirk said they will see what comes back from the RFP, if approved.

“It’s a challenging site and would be expensive to develop,” he said. “We see it as testing the market to see the interest with

this. It’s also challenging from a permitting standpoint.”

McDaniel said if the RFP is approved Thursday, it would likely hit the streets by the end of August. She said they would probably make proposals due by October, and also cautioned that the costs to demolish the Pier are estimated at around \$5 million just to start. Rebuilding the Pier would cost around \$16 million, it is estimated.

Quirk said one potential use could be a marina to accent the new marina now being built next door at Pier 6 by Chuck and Ann Lagasse. Marinas are

in high demand for the growing boating community, and it would also reduce the rebuilding costs to develop the Pier.

However, McDaniel and Quirk said they do expect to see some commercial/residential proposals that would include floating buildings. This has been “floated” several years ago by a downtown Boston developer and the idea has only gained in popularity.

“There could also be a commercial/residential development proposed, which could be a floating development,” said Quirk. “I wouldn’t be surprised if we saw responses that have a commercial/

residential floating model.”

McDaniel said the BPDA has researched the idea and found some in San Francisco and in Europe, but so far the floating building concept has not gained traction in Boston yet.

Once all of the proposals are in and evaluated internally, McDaniel said they would likely present them for review to the community in January. The RFP would have been issued earlier in the year had it not been for delays due to COVID-19. The BPDA was prepared to issue the RFP in February or March.

New restrictions not a major impact on Encore right now

By Seth Daniel

New restrictions for occupancy by the state will likely not affect Encore Boston Harbor, a spokesman said over the weekend.

Restrictions in place and announced on Friday were not expected to have a significant impact on the resort, but if there were further upticks, Spokesman Eric Kraus said they would abide by any new restrictions.

“If the governor and the state have to roll back, we will roll back,” he said. “No one wants to have an uptick in positive results. We will do whatever we can to help the state reduce any increases. The best thing we can do is provide a safe environment to have a safe experience.”

Kraus further said they have no plans to furlough any workers right now, responding to rampant rumors that the casino was having to pull back on employment.

“We have no plans for a furlough at this time,” he said. “We still have 1,400 on furlough and would love to bring them back. Everything is dictated by business demand. If there is demand, there will not be furloughs.”

Kraus said the safety program put in place one month ago for their opening has been working remarkably well.

“It really is very effective,” he said. “We’re seeing more volume on slots and we’re starting to see people come back to the tables. Day-to-day performance is what we expected – no surprises.”

Encore will be before the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) on Thursday, Aug. 13, to discuss the possibility of bringing in Roulette and Craps games through a piloted device created at Encore for socially distanced standing games.

The MGC will also talk about the prospects of returning poker to the casinos potentially.

St. Mary’s Church flowers stolen again

Staff Report

One reader remarked two weeks ago about a nice story in the Patriot Bridge detailing an act of human kindness by a local florist who replaced the stolen St. Mary’s flower boxes free of charge.

It was a fine thing, indeed, until the flowers were stolen barely after the ink dried on the story.

The flower boxes on the steps of St. Mary’s were stolen last month after being there since May, but were replaced and detailed in a story in the paper on July 30.

However, in the early morning hours of July 30, the replacement flower boxes were also stolen.

“Thought you would like to know that the planters were stolen a second time from the steps of St. Mary’s Church,” wrote dedicated reader Thomas Annaratone.

“This theft occurred overnight... It is cruelly ironic that I discovered the theft when I went to water the flowers the morning of July 30 after reading your heartwarming story ‘Stolen-flowers re-appear through good deeds.’”

Both thefts were reported to Boston Police, and church leaders are hoping anyone with information will report it to the Boston Police at the local A-15 Station in Hays Square.

BUNKER HILL (from pg. 1)

Rutherford Avenue. It would also revitalize and modernize the shopping center – with no disruption or closures to existing stores during the project.

“Anticipated public realm and Bunker Hill Mall improvements to be advanced concurrently with the project include new canopies and façade treatments along Bunker Hill Mall’s Main Street frontage, new open-air pedestrian connections between Main Street and the interior of the Bunker Hill Mall, and modernization and renovation of the Austin-Main Plaza – also known as O’Reilly Park,” read the letter.

The current plans fall in line with other existing projects, including the Compact Living Unit Pilot program, the Rutherford Avenue/Sullivan Square Re-Design, and the Charlestown Urban Renewal Plan. There was no mention of the current PLAN Charlestown effort by the BPDA to study the City’s zoning and development future.

Councilor Lydia Edwards said she is calling for the developer to include the 100 units of

workforce and/or public housing that needs to be relocated as part of the Bunker Hill Housing Development project. Those 100 units of public housing have been left in the lurch since the most recent proposal for that project, and Edwards said this is the best solution she knows of to accommodate those residents.

“That’s a very large development and a great deal of community process that needs to happen,” she said. “We are in the middle of changing our zoning and they come up with this thing in Charlestown...I’m not interested in any new development that isn’t interested in accommodating or welcoming people from the Housing Development. I would like to see all 100 of those units from the Housing Development on that site. I think it’s a real show of being a good neighbor to have all of these folks from the Housing Authority come in with a voucher.”

She said she hears that a lot of people are already opposed to the project, but she said she realizes it

is privately owned and something is going to be built on that valuable land.

“I know people are outright opposed to it,” she said. “They bought the property. It was privately owned and they bought this site. Something is going to be built.”

State Rep. Dan Ryan said he has already heard concerns as well, but is open to working with New England Development on something that fits.

“Some people have already expressed concerns about height and density,” he said. “Some people have expressed those concerns to me already. We will have to take a serious look at scale and scope. I do like the proximity to the MBTA. This will be true transit oriented development. We need to avoid the cookie cutter type developments that spring up around transit. I think we, the community, can work with New England Development to find a proposal that fits in with the neighborhood while meeting some long range goals for this corridor.”

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CANDIDATES (from pg. 1)

in society. It was a thread that ran throughout the debate as Rep. Ryan cited a long and successful record, and Councilor Vidot cited dreams and aspirations for a new set of priorities that would elevate concerns of both communities in the 2nd Suffolk.

Vidot off the bat said she decided to run for the seat – which she did not plan on doing at all until after the pandemic started – because of a lack of leadership from the district’s state delegation, including state representative.

“Food insecurity and housing insecurity have long been an issue, but I feel the current elected officials have been ok in turning a blind eye to it,” she said. “I didn’t think the same folks that perpetuated these cycles...would be the ones to lead us out.”

Ryan said he is asking the voters to send him back to Beacon Hill because he has been doing a good job, and many of the prob-

lems tackled in Charlestown and Chelsea have become models for the state.

“I think people should re-elect me because I’m doing a good job,” he said. “It’s an amazing district and a diverse district, not only racially but socioeconomically... There was talk earlier about a lack of leadership for this district. The Student Opportunity Act was championed by Dr. Mary Bourque from the Chelsea Public Schools. The head of the Police Chiefs of Massachusetts reshaped the way police think about policing – that’s Chief Brian Kyes in Chelsea and he’s a state leader. The Chelsea Collaborative, GreenRoots and the Charlestown Coalition – which I was a founding member of – are all leading. What we’re doing in the 2nd District creating the state-wide models on how to fix urban communities. That’s why people should re-elect me. I understand the issues and I’m moving things forward. I have a record to run on

and it’s a pretty good one.”

Vidot said when referring to a lack of leadership, it wasn’t about overall leadership, but just the state delegation.

“Ultimately why people should elect me is there is a lot of work to do and we need advocates that are going to amplify the people in a way that isn’t politics as usual,” she said. “My reference to a lack of leadership wasn’t about the local groups; it’s about the state delegation and the state period.”

A noticeable difference wasn’t so much on the issues at hand, but on the practicality of certain issues. For example, on free education at public colleges and free fares on the MBTA, Vidot said it was time to make those things free and prioritize them. Meanwhile, Ryan said he was open to thinking about such things, but would need to hear a practical way to pay for such massive, free services.

“I’d like to say free public transit for everyone, but you can’t say

that unless you find a way to pay for it,” he said. “There are ways to do it with some of the big developments in downtown Boston. Then again, we don’t know what downtown will look like after COVID-19.”

Said Vidot, “I don’t plan on going to the State House and start by giving everyone a free education. I’m saying we need to re-imagine the possibilities and re-imagine our priorities where we’re putting people first...We need to invest in our people.”

Ryan had a highlight in talking about Affordable Housing, when identifying Gov. Charlie Baker’s bill that has stalled out in the Legislature – mostly because suburban lawmakers and residents don’t want to consider more affordable housing in their communities. He said a lot of the issues and suffering underlying COVID-19 had to do with the inability to spread out affordable housing.

“I have been working with the City Councils and City governments to do more to make housing affordable,” he said. “If the people in the suburbs don’t want to build, this problem will continue statewide. They might have their progressive signs on the lawn, but they have a pretty big lawn. If they don’t want to build, it’s going to take a while to get our vote to 50 percent to approving housing statewide. That’s why I’m working with City Councils, because we understand the City’s problems.”

Vidot had a highlight when

touching on overall themes about environmental justice, education inequity and health care for all. Her them was that all of those issues were racial issues and needed to be discussed holistically.

“We need to talk about all of these issues holistically,” she said. “Otherwise it’s just a slice of pizza and we’re not looking at the whole pie.”

One of the major issues in the election – and every state legislative election – is that of policing reform, particularly on Qualified Immunity which protects police officers and other public officials while in the function of their jobs.

Both candidates are in line with reforming Qualified Immunity.

Vidot said she supported its repeal, noting that no other job has such protections.

Ryan cited that he was an original co-sponsor of the bill to reform Qualified Immunity 18 months ago when it wasn’t an issue in the public eye, and no one showed up at a hearing to testify on it. He has since not changed his position on the matter.

The debate is available to watch on the MassVote Facebook page as a recording, and another forum sponsored by the Chelsea Record on climate issues is slated to take place Thursday, Aug. 13, online.

Voting has already begun by mail, and early voting starts this month, with the Democratic Primary Election Day being Sept. 1.

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COUNCILOR LYDIA EDWARDS HOLDS IN-PERSON COFFEE HOURS

Councilor Lydia Edwards began holding in-person coffee hours recently throughout the district, holding a Charlestown event on Friday, Aug. 14, at Charlestown Tea & Treats. Councilor Edwards said it was important to re-start the events to keep in contact with residents.

“I was so thankful that I got to start my coffee hours again

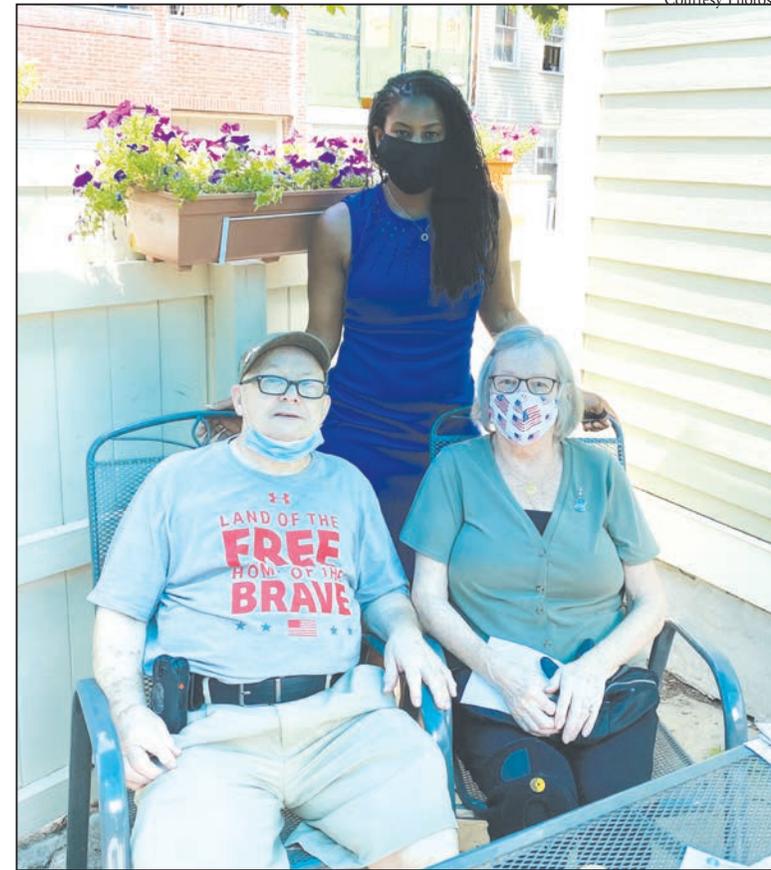
in East Boston, the North End, and Charlestown,” she said. “It’s important to keep a clear line of communication between my office and community members during COVID.

Residents deserve to have their concerns addressed and hold their elected officials accountable to maintain a great quality of life.”

Courtesy Photos



Councilor Edwards spoke with a constituent about issues in the neighborhood during her first Coffee Hour event since COVID-19.



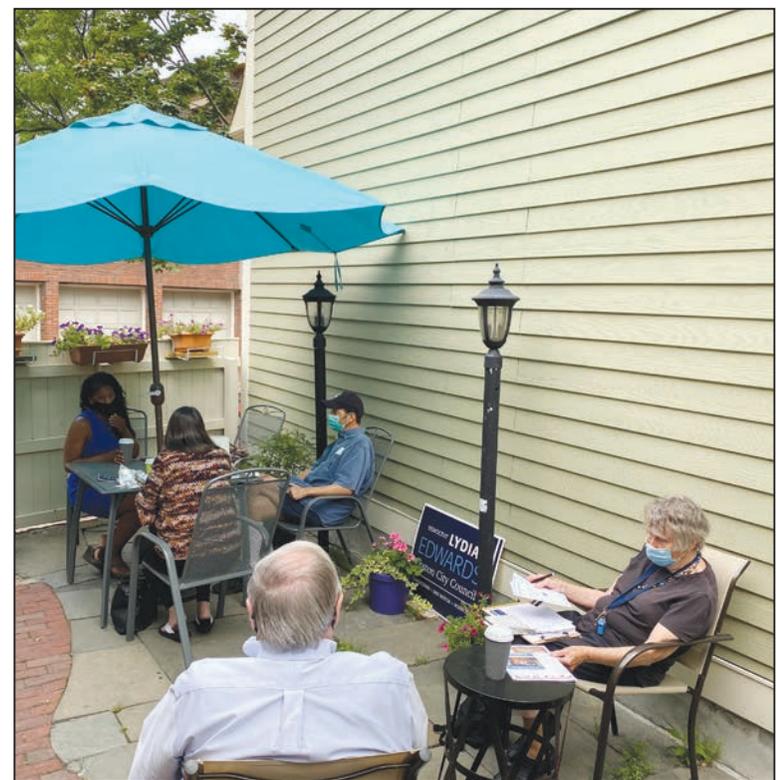
Residents were happy to return to an in-person discussion with the Councilor, rather than another online meeting.



Councilor Lydia Edwards visits with Rosemarie Kverek and other constituents.



State Rep. Dan Ryan stopped in to pay a visit to the Councilor.



Residents chatted with Councilor Edwards on the patio of Tea & Treats.



Police District Capt. Robert Ciccolo attended the North End Coffee Hour with Councilor Edwards.

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Edwards calls initial hearing on Charter Change a great first step

By Seth Daniel

City Councilor Lydia Edwards held her first Council hearing on Aug. 6 regarding a proposed Charter Change that would re-vamp the City Budget process – providing more back and forth discussion with the administration – and called that first discussion a very positive initial step.

“What we’re doing is historic,” she said. “We’re are trying to take this Charter Change directly to the voters in 2021. The question is why and why now. This is my third City Budget in Boston and with each vote I’ve only been given and up or down vote. It’s just up or down and it’s a \$3 billion decision. I don’t think I am advocating for my district with just ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ In a thriving democracy the legislators hold the purse. We need an ongoing back and forth with the mayor about the City Budget. It should be a requirement of our job.”

The Boston City Council’s Committee on Government Operations held the hearing

on the proposed amendment, and it’s an amendment Edwards filed in response to the calls for systemic change in Boston and nationally regarding the City Budget. Historically, the City Council since the early 1900s has

been limited in what it can and cannot do regarding the Budget. There is no way for them to negotiate or question line items or specific expenditures. As was shown in last month’s showdown on the Budget, it becomes an all or nothing situation – and voting against the Budget ends up being a vote to cut jobs of constituents and City workers.

“Having a discussion about the budget should not mean voting against the budget and sacrificing someone’s job,” she said. “I don’t think that should be on the table. People’s jobs being on the table to cut if we don’t vote for the Budget should not be part of this.”

Under Massachusetts General Laws, a member of the City Council may suggest a charter amendment. The proposal by Councilor Edwards will give Boston residents a choice in what the City’s budgetary process should be and,

if approved by voters, would give taxpayers a greater say in how their tax dollars are spent by allowing for an expanded participatory budgetary process.

She clarified that the amendment wouldn’t allow the Council to increase taxes or defund any part of government, but rather would require the Council and the Mayor’s Office to engage with

one another in creating the Budget piece by piece.

Edwards said most of her colleagues were in line with the idea, and there was near perfect attendance at the meeting on Aug. 6. There were some reservations about certain parts – and one colleague did not agree with the proposal at all. However, with the initial support, there is good reason to believe, she said, that it would be voted out of Committee eventually and likely the Council too. The matter would not go to the State House or the Mayor’s Office for any sort of review afterward. It would simply be reviewed by the Attorney General’s Office, and then placed on the Nov. 2021 City Election ballot.

Further hearings will look into whether the change would include being able to work cooperatively on the School Department budget as well, and right now it’s not certain if that’s possible under state law. Also, they will continue to refine the language in the question that potentially will be placed on the ballot.

“Right now the biggest step is to get it on the ballot,” she said. “All of 2021 will be discussing why we want this amendment...I’m hoping the mayor will also want a democratic question on the ballot. I think it serves him well.”

•TIME FOR A BUNKER HILL DEVELOPMENT ZOOM MEETING

Councilor Edwards this week also called for a Zoom meeting of the Impact Advisory Group (IAG) of the Bunker Hill Development project – a project that was ready to hold community meetings just as COVID-19 hit the city. All of those meetings were first proposed to go online, and then they were cancelled.

Edwards is hoping the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) will consider holding a Zoom meeting of the IAG. She said it has been done for other communities, such as Newmarket and East Boston.

“I think now we’re just wasting time,” she said.

•EDWARDS IN FAVOR OF REMOTE LEARNING, WITH EXCEPTIONS

The biggest debate raging this summer – especially for families with young children – is what will happen this September with the public schools. Right now, the Boston Public Schools are poised to implement a hybrid, in-person program with a remote learning option for parents that choose to keep kids at home. The virus numbers will dictate that plan, and it could change, but some are of the opinion it should be fully remote

in September.

Councilor Edwards is among them, but also said there needs to be exceptions for special needs and vulnerable students.

“There needs to be exceptions made,” she said. “It should be all remote with exceptions. There have to be exceptions. We need to slow this down now. We don’t have a vaccine yet. I think being cautious and slowly opening is much better than opening too fast and having to close schools in the middle of the year. I think that would be more disruptive to children than a slow, remote opening.”

•KUDOS TO TEMPORARY BRIDGE

One thing that hasn’t been controversial one bit – a few would have predicted this – is the closing of the North Washington Street Bridge and the opening of the temporary bridge. The process over the last month has gone smoothly, mostly aided by historic dips in commuter traffic due to the virus restrictions on offices and businesses.

Councilor Edwards said she is very impressed with the way it has rolled out.

“That has worked out well,” she said. “I have to give credit where credit is due. The Bridge is working well.”

State delegation secures local resources in \$1.8 billion bond bill

Chelsea and Charlestown will benefit immensely from an Information Technology Bond Bill bond bill signed by Gov. Charlie Baker last Friday.

Senator Sal DiDomenico and State Rep. Dan Ryan joined their colleagues in the Senate and House to pass legislation authorizing up to \$1.8 billion in spending for the improvement of information technology equipment and related projects in Massachusetts – bringing millions into the Chelsea and Charlestown communities to assist students in getting online for fall classes and to help senior citizens get access to computers.

The legislation also contains key funding for food security, housing and economic development, and investments in educational technologies in Massachusetts schools.

“As a member of the conference committee for this bond bill, I felt it paramount that we not only authorize capital investments for our district, but also main-

tain a strong focus on historically underserved and economically disadvantaged communities,” said Senator DiDomenico. “I am especially proud that this legislation includes the \$5 million I worked to secure for the development of a MassHealth and SNAP common application portal so low-income families can more easily access the nutritional resources they need during these trying times. I am grateful to Representative Ryan for his partnership in securing local priorities for the residents of Chelsea and Charlestown and Senate President Karen Spilka for her leadership in ensuring that our communities receive the support that we need.”

Said Rep. Dan Ryan, “I truly appreciate the work of my colleagues in the legislature, Speaker DeLeo, as well as the Governor for working collaboratively to bring vital resources to the Commonwealth’s IT infrastructure. As we continue to re-think

our world and how we interact remotely, our children and most vulnerable citizens will have more opportunity to engage with the world through improved technology.”

“Now, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, more than ever, everyone realizes the importance of our information technology infrastructure,” said House Speaker Bob DeLeo. “These investments will strengthen the resilience of our state and help provide more equitable access to key services for our residents. I thank Governor Baker, Senate President Spilka, and my colleagues in the Legislature for their work on this important bill and commend Representative Ryan for his tireless work on behalf of his district.”

The bill specifically includes budgeted items directly benefitting Chelsea and Charlestown:

•\$300,000 to public schools in Boston to provide increased broadband internet access.

•\$2.25 million for technology resources at the Chelsea Senior Center and Veterans’ Services.

•\$250,000 shall be expended for the community technology program in the city of Chelsea.

•\$100,000 for the One Bead Project to expand technology for low-income families in Boston.

•\$1.5 million shall be expended to address disparities in education, housing and small businesses in the city of Chelsea which negatively impact socially and economically disadvantaged communities including, but not limited to, communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system or by racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias.

The plan includes \$660 million dedicated to state information technology needs, including \$40 million in education grants to public schools to enhance remote learning environments and services.

The capital plan also includes

the following:

•\$798 million for state and local general technology infrastructure;

•\$660 million for state information technology upgrades;

•\$110 million in public safety infrastructure and equipment;

•\$117 million for reinvestment in disproportionately impacted communities;

•\$105 million in educational information technology and other capital projects;

•\$65 million in housing and economic development grants;

•\$37 million in food security grants;

•\$30 million in public safety accountability technologies including body cameras and a race and ethnicity data sharing system; and

•\$10 million to fund technology investments at community health centers.

The bill was signed into law by the Governor.

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Right to the City VOTE endorses challenger Damali Vidot

Right to the City VOTE! (RTC) is excited to announce our endorsement of Damali Vidot for the Massachusetts State House Democratic Primary Election on September 1, 2020.

RTC is a citywide political collective working to build the political power of Boston's rising electorate around a progressive agenda led by working-class communities of color. It is the only multiracial, multilingual, and multigenerational 501(c)(4) project in Boston and one of the few in Massachusetts. RTCV activists are a powerful force involved in year-round organizing and civic engagement to transform communities of color into high turnout neighborhoods.

Progressives have often failed to challenge the status quo by dividing their votes. Instead, RTCV has convened a diverse coalition to build unity by working through debates, candidate interviews, and long deliberations for a collective decision and a coordinated strategy, anchored by the organizing and power building of those most impacted.

In this cycle, RTCV has made an endorsement in the Democratic primary for the 2nd Suffolk State House District. They are backing a candidate who demands an equi-

table recovery from the COVID-19 public health crisis in Damali Vidot, who is currently a Chelsea City "Councilorette."

"Damali is a leader who will fight to ensure our communities are not left behind as we "return to normal," and will ensure that we get the resources we need," said RTCV chair Noemi Ramos. "We know Damali will work with us and our community in solving future issues, and that she respects our leadership in the community."

"Damali has elevated the voices of those who have long been silenced by systemic injustice throughout her entire career," said Chelsea School Committee member and Mijente Boston member Roberto Jiménez Rivera. "She has asked the hard questions and pushed to end politics-as-usual so we can have a progressive government that centers those who are suffering the most. She will be not only a reliable vote, but an amazing leader for people of color both inside and outside of the State House."

RTC interviewed candidates on key community-centered issues, their plans and priorities should they be elected, and their track record and background in their communities.

Walsh announces free Bluebikes passes for local workers

Staff Report

Mayor Martin J. Walsh, in partnership with the cities of Cambridge, Everett, and Somerville and the Town of Brookline, announced the availability of free Bluebikes passes for some of Boston's most important workers: those employed at grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, and local retail shops. Passholders will be able to take as many trips as they like during a 90-day period.

Workers at any grocery store or pharmacy in the Boston metro area are eligible for the program. In addition, people employed at restaurants and retail shops located in Boston and Cambridge are eligible for these passes. Passes are good for 90 days from sign-up. Riders will be able to take trips up to 60 minutes without incurring additional fees. At the end of the 90-day pass, riders will need to

proactively sign up for a new pass.

"Bluebikes provides a great way for anyone to take short trips by bike across our city," said Mayor Walsh. "We want to make this opportunity even more accessible for some of our most critical workers."

Most of Boston's small business districts are served by Bluebikes. Workers can pick up a bike near their homes and park it at a station near work, without having to worry about maintenance or carrying a lock.

Bluebikes is affordable public transportation. Beyond this pass-program, discounted 30-day and annual passes are available to anyone who participates in a public assistance program, including MassHealth, SNAP, LIHEAP, and more. These passes are available for \$5 for 30 days or \$50 for the full year. Full-price passes are only \$99 for a year or \$2.50 for a single trip.



Charlestown Boys & Girls Club summer employees and program participants.

Massport supports summer jobs for Charlestown students

Staff Report

Charlestown students were able to experience a change of pace and scenery while also gaining some valuable skills this summer through the Massachusetts Port Authority's Community Summer Jobs Program. Now in its 29th year, Massport's program supported 11 Charlestown area high school and college students in summer jobs with community organizations.

This summer, 279 area high school and college students will earn a paycheck through our Community Summer Jobs

Program. Massport is funding summer jobs at Charlestown Boys & Girls Club and the Charlestown Community Center.

Massport's Community Summer Jobs Program is designed to help civic and social service agencies by providing funds to support youth employment in neighboring communities including: Charlestown, Chelsea, East Boston, Revere, South Boston, Winthrop, Bedford, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln and Worcester.

"During these challenging times, we strive to be a good neighbor by supporting the youth in our surrounding communities,"

said Massport CEO Lisa Wieland. "Creating work opportunities for these young people allows them to gain hands-on experience and give back to the communities in which they live."

Participating organizations are responsible for recruiting, interviewing, hiring and supervising student employees. Since Massport's Community Summer Jobs Program started in 1991, thousands of summer jobs have been funded providing local high school and college students with the opportunity to gain important job skills while serving their community.

North Washington Street Bridge (Charlestown Bridge) Construction Look-Ahead:

WORK HOURS

- Most work will be done during the daytime (4:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
- Other work will be done overnight (10:00 pm. – 4:00 a.m.)
- In multiple shifts (6:00 a.m. – 1:00 a.m.)

MARINE IMPACTS

- The temporary Safety Zone on the Charles River prohibiting transit through all spans of the North Washington Street Bridge was lifted at midnight on Tuesday, 8/11. This closure allowed for the safe removal of the center swing span steel of the existing bridge. At 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday, 8/11 the remain-

ing center swing span steel was removed, and the channel and locks resumed recreational usage.

- As of 8/7, 95% of the center swing span steel of the existing bridge had been removed.

DESCRIPTION OF SCHEDULED WORK

- Demolition of north and south deck and sidewalks, removal of asbestos duct bank, and installation of drain line. Beginning Monday, 8/10 the demolition of the pier sub-structure began.

WORK THAT HAS BEEN COMPLETED

- Prior to 8/6: inspection and

wrap up of Fender System and installation of fencing system around work zone.

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.

Local officials endorse Dan Ryan for re-election in the Second Suffolk

Election Day in the race for the Second Suffolk district is coming quickly. Two prominent Chelsea City Councilors touted their long-standing working relationships with State Representative Dan Ryan by endorsing him this past week.

Councilor Calvin T. Brown announced his endorsement of

Ryan in a letter sent to his closest supporters in Chelsea.

“Dan’s experience in our city and his ability to move government has brought vital state resources to bear on the issues we face today. Dan has led by working collaboratively with city government. I am proud to support his re-election,” announced City-Councilor

Cal Brown.

“Councilor Brown and I have worked well together over the years. As a City Councilor, and in his former role as a State Committee person, I’ve always trusted Cal’s understanding of the issues and his instincts in politics,” replied Ryan. “I’m truly grateful for his support.”



District 8 Councilor Calvin Brown announced this week he is backing State Rep. Dan Ryan for re-election.



Councilor at-Large Leo Robinson has endorsed State Rep. Dan Ryan for re-election to state representative.

For the Record

STREET SWEEPING RESUMED, NO TOWS

The City of Boston and the Public Works Department announced that ticketing enforcement during street sweeping operations will resume on Monday, August 10. As part of the announcement, the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) will not tow vehicles until further notice. However, tickets will be issued to those in violation of street sweeping rules starting August 10. Residents can sign up for street sweeping alerts at boston.gov. Parked cars will be given courtesy flyers in ten different languages reminding residents of street sweeping.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the decision was made in March to stop towing and ticketing during street sweeping operations. Now, failure to move a vehicle during posted street sweeping hours results in a \$40 fine, \$90 in Charlestown, and \$90 for overnight street sweeping.

The City is also waiving any parking ticket received by a healthcare worker upon appeal with the exception of public safety violations, such as parking in a handicapped spot or in front of a fire hydrant.

From the Aug. 13 Emergency License Board meeting, noon, online:

Emergency Virtual Informational Hearing Beer Gardens + Large Extensions

Hearing regarding licensees operating on special one-day licenses and licensees with temporary extensions with a significant capacity. You are hereby notified that the Licensing Board for the City of the Boston will conduct a virtual emergency informational hearing regarding all establishments operating on a series of Special One-Day Licenses (commonly referred to as beer gardens) and those operating on a temporary extension with a significant capacity on August 13, at noon.

From the Aug. 14 Emergency License Board meeting, 1 p.m., online:

Emergency Virtual Hearing - You are hereby notified that the Licensing Board for the City of the Boston will conduct a virtual emergency informational hearing regarding all establishments with a Club License, Veteran’s License, or Temporary C.V. License on August 14, 2020, at 1 p.m. The Emergency Informational Hearing is being held to address the numerous complaints received by the Board and the Inspectional Services Department regarding the operations of Licensees.

From the Aug. 17, 10:30 a.m., COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS WORKING SESSION: An ordinance to provide for the safe disposal of sharps through the establishment of a Product Stewardship Program.

From the Aug. 18, 10 a.m., COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT HEARING: Support for tenants facing eviction and displacement and the creation of temporary rental assistance to support residents impacted by COVID-19.

From the Aug. 20, 1 p.m., COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION HEARING: Order for a hearing regarding implementing changes for safe streets during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

This matter is sponsored by Councilor Michelle Wu and Councilor Liz Breadon and was referred to the Committee on Planning, Development and Transportation on April 29.

BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON PERMITS

Due to the harsh economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses, the Boston Fire Department is extending the expiration date on all existing Place of Assembly and Annual Permits from June 30, 2020 to September 30, 2020. Any issued Place of Assembly Permit or Annual Permit stating an expiration date of June 30, 2020 will now automatically be valid in the City of Boston until September 30, 2020. The invoices for renewal will be mailed out in mid-August, and the permitting cycle for both Place of Assembly and Annual Permits will become October 1 to September 30 of the following year from this point forward.

REPORTING WORKPLACE SAFETY CONCERNS

•Workers in any size organization have options if they feel they are being pressured into an unsafe situation. Attorney General Maura Healey has created resources for workers to report safety concerns during reopening. They include an online form at the Attorney General’s website and a dedicated Fair Labor hotline at 617-727-3465. People can also find those resources by calling 311.

•HOW TO REPORT A PROBLEM PROPERTY

Since taking office in 2014, Mayor Walsh has made fixing quality of life issues a priority in his administration. From investing in Public Works to making sure community policing is a staple in every neighborhood, we are making sure every neighborhood is clean, safe and a great place to live and work in. Unfortunately some properties in Boston need more help than others, and that’s why we are here. If you know of a property that fits one of the following criteria: multiple calls to 911, one that’s blighted or just a general concern, we encourage you to reach out to your neighborhood liaison.

Councilor Leo Robinson also released a similar statement this week.

“Dan and I have worked on many issues together over the years,” he said. “Most recently, navigating the State House to deliver a home rule petition that will positively impact the way we deliver public housing in Chelsea. I am pleased to support his re-election.”

“I’ve always appreciated Councilor Robinson’s knowledge of the issues confronting Chelsea but more importantly, his understanding of how city government works to address those issues,” said Ryan. “Leo’s experience in times like this are indispensable. I’m honored to have his endorsement.”

These most recent announcements added to the many endorsements of Ryan that have been rolled out throughout the campaign. They provide a glimpse into Ryan’s local support in the Second Suffolk District. Out of the gate, back in June, Ryan announced the support of Second Suffolk resident Attorney General Maura Healey, Boston City Councilor Lydia Edwards who represents half of the district and of course, State Senator Sal DiDomenico who represents both Chelsea and Charlestown.

“This broad, local support sends an important message. At a time

when the country is pulling itself apart with partisan squabbling, we here in the Second Suffolk District, in Chelsea and Charlestown, pull together to support one another in the work we are doing. This synergy is why we’ve been able to respond to the issues that confront us in a positive, pro-active way,” said Ryan.

Ryan was also recently endorsed by the Chelsea Ward 4 Democratic Committee, made up of local political activists. Last week, Ryan also announced support from the AFL-CIO along with many affiliated locals. These labor unions represent thousands of workers here Chelsea and Charlestown. Ryan said these endorsements are just the tip of the iceberg; they signify large swaths of support from within the district with more to come.

“It’s important to show that the people who live, work and play in Chelsea and Charlestown and the people they choose to represent them understand the work we do together everyday to move our cities and government forward. It’s a good feeling to be recognized by the people you’ve worked closely with over the years,” said Ryan.

Dan Ryan is in his third term as the State Representative for the Second Suffolk District. The Second Suffolk district contains much of Chelsea and the Charlestown neighborhood of Boston.

Damali Vidot highlights connection between COVID-19 and environmental justice

As the race for the House of Representatives' Second Suffolk seat heats up, Damali Vidot, current At-Large Chelsea City Councilor and Candidate for State Representative of Charlestown and Chelsea, continues to build momentum from a diverse group of organizations, including a powerful slate of climate change and environmental justice advocacy organizations.

To date, she has been endorsed by the Massachusetts Chapter of Sierra Club, 350 Mass Action, Sunrise Boston, and the Environmental League of Massachusetts Action Fund.

This support is especially important as Massachusetts struggles to address COVID-19. Vidot, currently representing the COVID-19 hotspot of Chelsea, Massachusetts, has worked to highlight the intersections of environmental injustice and the virus

in her leadership on the issue. Research has shown that communities with increased exposure to industrial pollution, which affects air quality and respiratory health, have suffered from higher rates of death due to COVID-19. The communities most burdened by this pollution are low-income communities and communities of color—including many residents of Charlestown and Chelsea.

"People tend to ignore the environmental impacts in our communities because it's something that can't be seen or touched. But those of us that have compromised immune systems can't ignore it—we feel it every day," said Vidot.

"It's particularly important for us, for communities like Chelsea and Charlestown, which suffer from dangerously high rates of asthma—to prioritize environmental justice. When a global pandemic comes to town it makes it

almost impossible for us to fight it, compared to more affluent communities. The resources just aren't there. We need real advocates to fight for our access."

The high rates of asthma that Councilor Vidot mentions exacerbate the symptoms of COVID-19 and have led to the loss of over 150 lives in Chelsea.

Councilor Vidot is the advocate who will fight for the resources that Chelsea and Charlestown need. Her platform calls for robust environmental protections, including: the elimination of fossil fuel dependency in Massachusetts by 2030, a just transition to clean energy alternatives with investments in job training and job security for workers, and demands that residents have greater representation against the companies that have polluted and threatened communities like Chelsea and Charlestown for decades.

Vidot recognizes that she can't build the path forward alone. And, in fact, she won't have to. The many environmental justice and climate change advocacy organizations that have endorsed her campaign recognize the incredible work she has done, and expect an even greater impact when her voice is amplified at the State House.

Damali prioritizes "science-based and community-driven solutions", said Clare Kelly of the Environmental League of Massachusetts Action Fund, and will take a "proactive leadership style to fight for her community", according to Jonathan Cohn of Sierra Club MA. She has "an astounding record fighting for the most fundamental rights of her constituents", said Sabrina Larkin of the Sunrise Boston Electoral Team. Cabell Eames of 350 Mass Action emphasized that Damali

"will be an environmental and climate champion" on Beacon Hill.

This experience, as a proactive leader unafraid to dig in and get the work done is exactly what's needed right now.

"At the end of the day, we have to re-imagine and re-envision our post-COVID world. The intersections of issues such as environment, racism, COVID-19, public health, housing security and transit have been ignored for far too long.", said Vidot. "By recognizing how these areas intersect with each other, we can truly build an equitable world together. As your next State Representative for Charlestown and Chelsea, you'll have more than a consistent vote—you'll have an advocate, ally, and leader on the issues."

Tatte owner excited to be in Charlestown, new position was long time in the making

By Seth Daniel

The founder of Tatte Bakery + Café said this week she is excited to have opened the doors of the shop in Charlestown last month, and did not step down as CEO because of any local zoning challenges or any employee-related complaints.

Tzurit Or said they had never envisioned having to open in a pandemic, but the Charlestown opening went great despite the fact that it came in a very challenging time for businesses.

"The opening went great," she said. "We are very thankful for the warm welcome we've received from the Charlestown community. Opening during a pandemic is challenging and not the way we, or anyone would want to open their door, but it was important to us to provide a sense of comfort to the neighborhood and open our doors. As you might remember our opening date got pushed a few times due to the pandemic, but once we were allowed to resume constructions and finish the project, we knew the right thing to do would be to open our doors."

Or seemed to suddenly step down as CEO last month, but she told the Patriot Bridge that it wasn't so sudden and certainly wasn't because of a local zoning use challenge in Charlestown or high-profile employee letters asking for change.

"I want to be clear; I started my transition from the CEO role a few months ago and announced it internally several weeks ago," she said. "I've been wanting to step down for over three years but never had the opportunity to do so. Me stepping to a new role has nothing to do with the recent events. It's the right thing for me and my skills and the right thing for Tatte as it grows. I will be focusing [as I've done since 2008 when I started Tatte] in our bakery, food, café design and the essence of Tatte as its founder and chief creative officer."

The building owner and Tatte on Warren Street are facing a zoning challenge over the restaurant use in the ground-floor space by

Charlestown's Ken Flynn. That challenge—which features the head-on collision of zoning codes and Urban Renewal Plans—is currently in the City's Legal Department under review per order of Zoning Board Chair Christine Araujo.

Meanwhile, BPDA officials told the Patriot Bridge last week that when granting retail modifications, a restaurant use is a standard use under that designation.

That conflict was at the heart of Flynn's argument against Tatte being able to open, as his attorney indicated that restaurant uses were not part of retail designations in an Urban Renewal Area.

That's the crux of what the Legal Department is reviewing right now.

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USS Constitution reopened for public visitation

Staff Report

USS Constitution reopened to free public visitation on Aug. 7 and is scheduled to continue to open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Approximately 1,000 guests visited Old Ironsides during the

reopening weekend, from Aug. 7-9.

To ensure the safety of guests and USS Constitution's Sailors during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the crew is following the preventative guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Department of the Defense



Cmdr. John Benda, commanding officer of USS Constitution, celebrates the Facebook Live Fourth of July celebration earlier this summer.



USS Constitution reopens to the public last Friday after five months of being closed. About 1,000 guests toured the ship at a safe distance during the opening weekend.

and Navy leadership.

All guests are required to wear a face covering, and groups are limited to 25 people or less to promote social distancing.

Visits last approximately 30

minutes, and the ship's crew clean and sanitize surfaces and handrails between visitor groups. In mid-March, USS Constitution closed to public visitation to reduce exposure to COVID-19, and the crew began offering virtual tours, hosting more than 3 million virtual visitors.

Virtual tours will continue Monday to Thursday at 10 a.m. on the ship's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ussconstitutionofficial.

During each virtual tour, the ship's active-duty Sailors take viewers through the ship, to

include several areas normally closed to the public, and provide an opportunity for viewers to ask live questions.

At this time, no Sailors assigned to USS Constitution have tested positive for COVID-19.

The active-duty Sailors stationed aboard USS Constitution provide free tours and offer public visitation to more than 600,000 people a year as they support the ship's mission of promoting the Navy's history, maritime heritage and raising awareness of the importance of a sustained naval presence.

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Seamen Justin Howell prepares to give a tour aboard USS Constitution during its re-opening last Friday.

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