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THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 2024



FREE

# CHARLESTOWN

PATRIOT-BRIDGE

## OATH OF OFFICE



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY MIKE MEJIA

Mayor Michelle Wu administers the Oath of Office to members of the Boston City Council at Faneuil Hall.

## Louijeune newly elected president of the Council

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

Boston City Councilor At-Large Ruthzee Louijeune has been sworn in as the President of the Boston City Council, making her not only the third Black woman to hold this position, but also the first Haitian-American.

'It was an honor to nominate Councilor Ruthzee Louijeune as council president,' said District 1 Councilor Gabriella Coletta. 'I'm confident the Council will promote collaboration, governance, and accountability this legislative session.'

"I am excited for what's to come for our city, and believe that our collective work can transform our beloved city into one where every person feels honored, safe, housed, and healthy," said Louijeune. "I am hopeful, and I am grateful, because the only way we get through, the only way we thrive, the only way we push for-



Boston City Councilor At-Large Ruthzee Louijeune.

ward, is together."

"Councilor Louijeune has shown she knows how to build bridges to address issues that impact all Boston residents from tackling crucial city services to spearheading initiatives that create more affordable housing and uplift our most underserved communities," said District 4 Councilor Brian Worrell. 'I am proud to sup-

port her as our next Council President in my capacity as Council Vice President and look forward to partnering with her and all of our colleagues to deliver for our City.'

There is additional significance to the swearing in, as January 1st also celebrates Haitian Independence Day, the most important holiday in the Haitian community. On January 1, Haitians celebrate their role in history as the first free Black republic in the Western hemisphere and the only country in the world founded from a slave revolt. Boston is home to the third largest Haitian diaspora in the country.

As Louijeune was sworn in, the chambers filled with family, friends, and loved ones dawned in red and blue, celebrating both Haitian Independence Day and her history-making appointment.

In her first speech as council

(COUNCIL Pg. 11)

## APPRECIATION

## Former State Rep. Richard Voke dies at 76

Staff Report

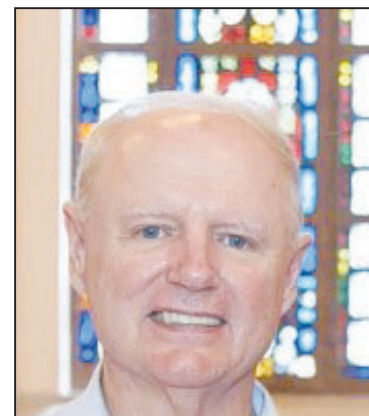
Richard Voke, who served as Charlestown's state representative from 1978 to 1996, died on Sunday, Dec. 31, 2023, at Massachusetts General Hospital Boston. He was 76.

Voke was first elected in Chelsea to the House of Representatives in 1976 when it consisted of 240 members. When the governmental body was reduced to 160 members and the Chelsea and Charlestown districts were merged, Voke ran for the seat and defeated Rep. James P. Collins of Charlestown in a hard-fought election.

Voke rose through the ranks and served as Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee and as House Majority Leader. Voke lost a battle for the House speakership to Thomas Finneran in 1996 and decided to step down from his position as state representative.

Visiting hours will be held on Saturday, Jan. 6, from 8:30 a.m. to noon, at Carafa Funeral Home, 389 Washington Ave., Chelsea. A Mass of Christian Burial will follow the visitation at 12:30 p.m. at the Our Lady of Grace Church, 59 Nichols St., Chelsea.

The following are remarks from local leaders and friends on the passing of Richard Voke:



Richard Voke.

**Josh Kraft, former Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston president and CEO, on the passing of Richie Voke:**

"Thousands of kids and families have been impacted by the club. He's touched all of them because of his passion and commitment to and making a difference for so many. Personally, he was a great mentor to me. I learned so much from him. He's a mentor and a friend, and I will miss him dearly."

**Former state representative Gene O'Flaherty on the passing of Richie Voke:**

"When I succeeded Richie in the House in 1996, it was very evident of how effective a legislator he was for the district and

(VOKE Pg. 3)

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# EDITORIAL

## THE HOLIDAYS ARE OVER -- NOW IT'S BACK TO REALITY

The holiday season may have provided the usual respite for all of us from the strife and turbulence that has been assaulting us daily for the better part of the past decade, but despite the arrival of the New Year, we still have to face our same old problems.

The war in Ukraine continues to grind on, with Vladimir Putin targeting primarily civilians in cities far from the battlefield. The Israel-Hamas war likewise has no apparent end in sight, with civilians on both sides suffering greatly. In addition, with other Iranian-backed terrorist organizations threatening to expand the war not only against Israel, but also against the United States and world-wide commercial shipping, the potential for a much-larger conflict increases with each passing minute.

China, the other member of the Axis of Evil, continues to encroach its military bases and fleet on the sovereignty of other nations and threatens to launch an invasion of Taiwan at any time.

Scientists have confirmed that 2023 was off-the-charts for being the warmest year in the history of mankind, with the trend looming for an even-hotter 2024, promising to bring more devastating storms and climate change-related catastrophes in the year ahead.

Despite the strong economy, homelessness in the United States grew by 12 percent in the past year, with no imminent solution at any level of government. The increase in homelessness is a direct result of the lack of housing that has accumulated over the past decade to the point where it is estimated that the country is five million units short of what is needed to keep up with our growing population.

The situation at the border with Mexico represents a complete failure on the part of Congress and the White House, with the result that the situation for migrants is dire and American cities are being overwhelmed. Even Democratic governors and mayors are feeling besieged by the influx of immigrants for which our local and state governments are ill-equipped to handle.

The lack of meaningful gun legislation to stop the proliferation of deadly military-grade weapons all but assures that 2024 will see more mass shootings throughout the country.

Drug and alcohol abuse also shows no signs of abating and will continue to claim the lives of tens of thousands of Americans in the year ahead. American life expectancy continues to trail the rest of the industrialized world.

And last but not least, the political turmoil in the coming presidential year promises to be the most turbulent not only in our recent history, but since 1861 -- the start of the Civil War.

The prospects are overwhelming for a grim 2024. About all we can say is that we are living in an era that brings to mind the title from the Kevin Costner movie from the late 1980s -- No Way Out.

## Winter pet safety tips

It's been a rough winter so far in many parts of the country.

If you're a pet owner, that means you'll also need to keep your pets out of harm's way.

Best Friends Animal Society, a leading animal welfare organization working to end the killing of cats and dogs by 2025, offers the following tips to keep your pet as safe as possible:

- Outside animals should be brought indoors unless evacuation is required.

- Do not wait to evacuate. The longer you wait, the more difficult it will be to get out with your pets.

- If evacuating, please bring your pets with you. If that is not possible, do not keep animals enclosed in a pen or crate and make sure to keep pets on the highest floor or point of your home.

- Make a plan of where to go with your pet(s). Identify pet-friendly emergency shelters that may be open in your area for temporary respite. There are also pet-friendly hotels that you may be

able to locate online.

- Put together an emergency go-bag of all of your pets' essential items, such as medications, food, bowls, leash, crate, toys, blankets, and identification tags. It's also pertinent to have your animal's vaccination and medical records handy, including their microchip number, together inside a waterproof, sealed bag. Keep the bag as close to the door so that if you need to evacuate immediately, you can grab your pet and the bag and leave.

- Identify a neighbor who has access to your home and can grab your pets and their go bag if you are not home during a flooding event.

- Close all windows and doors. Additional Do's and Don'ts:

- Do not attempt to walk through floodwater. As little as six inches of moving water can knock you and your pet down.

- Do not allow your pet to drink any floodwater. Floodwater is polluted with chemicals, sewage

and other harmful debris and foreign materials that are harmful to your pet.

- Do not assume your pet can swim. Animals can panic if put in a situation that they are too stressed to handle.

- Do not drive through water or even over bridges that sit above fast-moving water, as they can collapse at a moment's notice.

- Do dry off a pet as quickly as possible. Wetness can cause bacterial growth and inflammation on their skin.

Don't have a pet? Now is the perfect time to adopt or foster a pet in need. Shelters across the country are at capacity due to less people choosing the adoption option. Every time you adopt, you are saving two lives: the life of the pet you are bringing home, as well as opening space for another homeless dog or cat to be taken in by shelters and rescue groups. To learn more, visit [bestfriends.org](https://bestfriends.org).

## More than one-third of Christmas tree home fires occur in January

More than one-third (34 percent) of U.S. home fires involving Christmas trees occur in January. With this post-holiday fire hazard in mind, the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) strongly encourages everyone to keep the festive memories and remove the hazards by disposing of Christmas trees promptly after the holiday season.

"As much as we all enjoy the look and feel of Christmas trees in our homes, they're large combustible items that have the potential to result in serious fires," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of Outreach and Advocacy at. "The longer Christmas trees remain in homes, the longer they present a risk."

Carli notes that fresh Christmas trees, which continue to dry out and become more flammable over time, are involved in a much larger share of reported Christmas tree

fires than artificial trees.

According to the latest statistics from NFPA, there was an estimated annual average of 150 home structure fires that began with Christmas trees, resulting in one civilian death, 10 civilian injuries, and \$14 million in direct property damage between 2017 and 2021. Overall, fires that begin with Christmas trees represent a very small but notable part of the U.S. fire problem, considering that they are generally in use for a short time each year.

To safely dispose of a Christmas tree, NFPA recommends using the local community's recycling program, if possible; trees should not be put in the garage or left outside. NFPA also offers these tips for safely removing lighting and decorations to ensure that they remain in good condition:

- Use the gripping area on the plug when unplugging electrical

decorations. Never pull the cord to unplug any device from an electrical outlet, as this can harm the wire and insulation of the cord, increasing the risk for shock or electrical fire.

- As you pack up light strings, inspect each line for damage, throwing out any sets that have loose connections, broken sockets or cracked or bare wires.

- Wrap each set of lights and put them in individual plastic bags or wrap them around a piece of cardboard.

- Store electrical decorations in a dry place away from children and pets where they will not be damaged by water or dampness.

For more information on home fire safety all winter long, visit "Put a Freeze on Winter Fires," a winter safety campaign NFPA promotes annually with the U.S. Fire Administration.

  
**CHARLESTOWN**  
PATRIOT-BRIDGE

THE CHARLESTOWN PATRIOT-BRIDGE,

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# UMass announces scholarships for top 10 percent of community college graduates

The University of Massachusetts announced that the top 10 percent of the Commonwealth’s future community college graduates will receive a minimum of \$5,000 per year above federal and private financial aid if they enroll at one of the four nationally ranked campuses in Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth, and Lowell.

The Community College Advantage Scholarship (CCAS) is designed to incentivize highly talented community college students to finish their associate degree at one of the Commonwealth’s 15 community colleges, and then complete their bachelor’s degree at one of the four nationally ranked University of Massachusetts campuses.

The CCAS also seeks to address two challenges facing public higher education in Massachusetts:

- Providing equitable access to historically underrepresented groups of students in light of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision on race-based admissions, and
- Strengthening the Commonwealth’s talent pipeline as the

number of high school graduates in Massachusetts is projected to decline in the coming years, the existing population is aging out of the workforce, and more young people are leaving the state.

“We want to send a clear message that UMass welcomes highly talented community college graduates to continue their pursuit of a college degree on our nationally ranked Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth and Lowell campuses,” UMass President Marty Meehan said. “We believe this initiative will lead to more community college graduates choosing to finish their four-year degree at UMass, which will accelerate their upward economic trajectory and strengthen the Commonwealth’s workforce.”

“As New England’s first Hispanic Serving Institution, Northern Essex Community College serves thousands of students each year, mostly from the Gateway Cities of Haverhill and Lawrence and towns across the Merrimack Valley, seeking a path to a college degree and greater career and economic

opportunities,” NECC President Lane Glenn said. “The Community College Advantage Scholarship will help more of them continue on that path from an associate degree to a bachelor’s degree at one of the state’s outstanding UMass campuses.”

Starting in Fall 2024, the CCAS will help develop and retain diverse talent in Massachusetts by:

- Guaranteeing students in the top 10 percent of their community college graduating class automatic admission to a University of Massachusetts campus and a minimum of \$2,500 per semester (\$5,000 annually) for a total of at least \$10,000 for the students’ final two years of college.
  - Students remain eligible for additional aid based on individual circumstances.
  - The CCAS will supplement federal and private grants awarded to the student.
- To be eligible for the Fall 2024 CCAS, students must:
- Complete their degree in the top 10 percent of their graduat-

ing class at their college. This will be calculated as of the end of the semester prior to the UMass financial aid priority deadline (Students applying for fall admission must have been in the top 10 percent of their class as of the end of the Fall 2023 semester).

- Complete the 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or equivalent state financial aid application.
- Be eligible for in-state tuition.
- Have earned 45+ credits that are transferable to UMass.
- Be on track to complete their associate degree prior to the Fall 2024 semester.

• The CCAS is the latest in a series of state and UMass initiatives aimed at expanding access to a four-year college degree, which data shows significantly enhances a person’s lifetime income.

The University has increased annual institutional financial aid by 67 percent to \$395 million since 2015 and has launched an early college program that allows high school students in urban centers to earn UMass course credit while still in high school, thereby saving them tuition costs once they get to college.

## VOKE (from pg. 1)

the Commonwealth. His years of exemplary service improved the quality of life of so many and not just in Charlestown and Chelsea but throughout Massachusetts. His colleagues held him in high esteem, his constituents re-elected him year after year and it’s easy to understand why. He was a model public servant. May God rest his soul.”

### Tom Cunha, Chairperson of the Charlestown Neighborhood Council, on the passing of former state representative Richie Voke:

“Richie was someone that Charlestown could call a friend. He was an incredible state representative. He made sure that the elderly in our community were always taken care of. He did a lot for Charlestown.”

### State Sen. Sal DiDomenico on the passing of former state representative Richie Voke:

“Richie Voke did so much for Charlestown and Chelsea and his accomplishments and achievements will continue to benefit residents for decades to come. He loved the people he served and they loved him. He was admired and respected on Beacon Hill and his leadership in the House of Representatives gave his district a strong voice and advocate to deliver for our

communities. His legacy will live on through the great work he did, especially for those who needed help the most. Richie never forgot his roots and always looked out for everyone.”

Helen Chin Schlichte, a proud Townie, the eldest of nine children. Whose grandfather opened a laundry on Main Street in the early 1900’s; that her father came to join him in 1918 offered the following reflections on Richard Voke:

Monday morning at 6:30 a.m., New Year’s Day, I read in the Globe that one of my best and treasured friends, Richard A. Voke, passed away. I was stunned. I am heartbroken.

Following his retirement from the House, we kept in touch. We are privileged to be Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston board members. It’s a near 50 year friendship.

Richard and I would check in every two weeks or so. We last chatted following the Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston special governance meeting on December 14. He was in Fort Lauderdale and shared his holiday plans. He lamented coming to Boston more frequently than he would like to take care of medical issues.

I have spent most of the time since Monday thinking about all the good Richard did from the time I first met him when he went to the House in 1978 to now. I was working as an Assistant Sec-

retary in the Executive Office for Administration and Finance. We each had an interest in politics and in public administration, making good policy. Many of his initiatives from his House days are documented; the new schools, the parks, remaking Chelsea during its worst days, helping Charlestown rebuild after removal of the Southeast expressway, funds for City Square Park. Not so well known are his many generosityes to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston (\$30,000 this past summer for Charlestown Green Street), the scholarships to Suffolk, Stonehill and Xavier in Louisiana are ones which come to mind and so many other organizations, including South Cove Manor, a 141 bed non-profit long-term care facility for the Asian elderly, where I am a co-founder.. Richard rarely spoke about his generosity.

I can’t believe my last conversation with him was on December 14. He sounded fine, was alert, and looking forward to holiday festivities.

Richard was such a fine person, kind, thoughtful, generous, positive. I am very fortunate to have the pleasure of knowing and working with a great man. I will miss him a lot.

It’s the New Year. I am very sad; Richard would want me to be positive and remember all the good things, which I will.

Happy New Year. May He Rest In Peace.

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63 Income-Restricted Homeownership Units

# of Units	# of Bedrooms	Estimated Square Feet	Price	Maximum Income Limit	# built out for Mobility Impairments
14	2-Bedroom	1,025 - 1,175	\$275,000	80%	2
4	3-Bedroom	1,110 - 1,210	\$300,000	80%	4
14	2-Bedroom	1,010 - 1,145	\$350,000	100%	-
4	3-Bedroom	1,140 - 1,270	\$390,000	100%	2
21	2-Bedroom	1,025 - 1,210	\$420,000	120%	-
6	3-Bedroom	1,025 - 1,270	\$465,000	120%	-

Maximum Income Limits  
(set by HUD/MOH + based on household size + Area Median Income (AMI))

Household Size	80% AMI	100% AMI	120% AMI
1	\$86,050	\$107,600	\$129,050
2	\$98,350	\$122,950	\$147,500
3	\$110,650	\$138,300	\$165,950
4	\$122,900	\$153,650	\$184,350
5	\$132,750	\$165,950	\$199,100
6	\$142,600	\$178,250	\$213,850

Maximum Asset Limits

80% AMI	100% AMI; 120% AMI
\$75,000	\$100,000

Do not include Retirement. Do include Real Estate

Applications are available during the application period for 60 days, from  
Friday, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 — Thursday, February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024

To request an online application or to have one sent by email, visit [www.OlmstedGreenLottery.com](http://www.OlmstedGreenLottery.com)

To have a hard copy of the application mailed to your mailing address, please call (617) 639-3064 Ext 796 | US Relay 711, email [OlmstedGreen@MaloneyProperties.com](mailto:OlmstedGreen@MaloneyProperties.com), or visit [www.OlmstedGreenLottery.com](http://www.OlmstedGreenLottery.com) and use the 'Contact Us' form at the bottom of the page.

We will be holding 2 informational meetings on the follow dates/times:

Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 6:00pm  
Gateway Center  
2 Hummingbird Lane, Boston, MA 02126

Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 6:00pm  
66 Hudson Street Community Room  
Chinatown, Boston, MA 02111

The informational meetings will also be streamed over Zoom using the below login information:  
<https://maloneyproperties.zoom.us/j/86344621362?pwd=CkVhSQpabWlpaU9uXzQpZ3NkZDlEK1>  
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Applications are available in person on the following days, dates, and times in the following place(s)

Day	Date	Time	Location
Thursday	January 4, 2024	3 PM - 7 PM	Gateway Center 2 Hummingbird Lane Boston, MA 02126
Saturday	January 6, 2024	10 AM - 2 PM	Gateway Center 2 Hummingbird Lane Boston, MA 02126
Thursday	January 25, 2024	2 PM - 6 PM	Lena Park Community Center 150 American Legion Hwy Dorchester, MA 02124
Saturday	February 3 2024	11 AM - 3 PM	Lena Park Community Center 150 American Legion Hwy Dorchester, MA 02124

DEADLINE: Applications must be submitted online or postmarked no later than **Thursday, February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024** Mailed to: Maloney Properties, Inc., 27 Mica Lane, ATTN: Olmsted Green Lottery, Wellesley, MA 02481

- Selection by Lottery.
- Asset & Use Restrictions Apply.
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Equal Housing Opportunity



# ArtsEmerson presents ‘Moby Dick’

# NEWS IN BRIEF

ArtsEmerson, Boston’s leading presenter of contemporary world theater and film and the professional presenting and producing organization of Emerson College, is excited to kick off its 2024 season with renowned director Yngvild Aspeli and the endlessly inventive Norwegian theater company, Plexus Polaire’s ‘Moby Dick’ at the Emerson Paramount Center from January 23 – 28, 2024. Herman Melville’s immeasurably influential novel is brought to life in this radiant stage production featuring seven actors, fifty puppets, video projections, a drowned orchestra and a life-sized whale.

‘Moby Dick’ is, on its surface, the simple tale of a whaling expedition, but the story’s haunting themes of unparalleled obsession lead us all to question the unexplained mysteries of life and of the human heart. In this groundbreaking production, the classic is reborn with a freshness and urgency that makes it truly unforgettable. The New York Times calls ‘Moby Dick’ “a stunning work of art.”

“We are thrilled to jump start 2024 with the wondrous feast for the eyes that is Plexus Polaire with Yngvild Aspeli’s ‘Moby Dick,’” says ArtsEmerson Interim Executive Director Ronee Penoi. “We think our audiences will be spellbound by this poetic and magical piece with breathtaking puppetry.”



PHOTO COURTESY CHRISTOPHE RAYNAUD DE LAGE

A scene from ‘Moby Dick’ by Plexus Polaire.

“I like how the sea somehow draws invisible lines between the different corners of the world, how it creates points of connection,” says ‘Moby Dick’ director Yngvild Aspeli. “How, facing this force of nature, we are all the same. And no-one captures the battle between man and nature like Herman Melville in ‘Moby Dick.’ An ancient white whale, a captain steering his ship into destruction and the inner storms of the human heart.”

Tickets for Moby Dick may be purchased 24/7 at ArtsEmerson.org, or by calling 617-824-8400 (Tue-Sat from 12:00PM ET - 6:00PM ET). The Paramount

Center Box Office (559 Washington Street, Boston) is open for walk-up service Thu-Sat from Noon - 6:00 PM ET. Tickets start at \$25. Groups of 10+ attending a performance save up to 30%.

Thanks to generous support from Rockland Trust, a limited number of \$10 Mobile Rush tickets will be available at 9:00 AM ET each performance day on a first-come, first-served basis, exclusively through the TodayTix mobile app. For more information, please click on “General Public” when you visit ArtsEmerson’s Offers web page.

## SULLIVAN SQUARE TRAFFIC ADVISORY

Motorists should be advised that the Sullivan Square Underpass will be closed beginning on Tuesday January 2 through Friday May 31 to perform repairs to the structure.

Motorists are encouraged to plan accordingly and/or seek alternative routes.

If you have any questions, please contact: [pwdengineering@boston.gov](mailto:pwdengineering@boston.gov).

## LYRIC STAGE BOSTON PRESENTS ‘TROUBLE IN MIND’

A tale that was meant to be told over 60 years ago, Dawn M. Simmons brings to Lyric Stage Boston, Alice Childress’s unflinching look at the standards of 1950’s Broadway in Trouble in Mind.

Meant for a Broadway run in 1957, Trouble in Mind never made its debut after producers urged Childress to subdue the content. Childress refused, and after a successful Broadway run in 2021, Lyric Stage is proud to present this re-discovered theatrical marvel as the playwright originally intended.

It’s 1955, and after enduring indignities and lost opportunities, Wiletta Mayer, a seasoned Black actress, is finally making

her Broadway debut. Written by a white playwright, her star vehicle is the allegedly progressive “Chaos in Belleville,” which turns out to be anything but. Leading a cast of both younger and experienced actors, Wiletta challenges not only the soft racism of her white director but also the veiled prejudice that limits her aspirations and success. With warmth, humor, and sharp insight, this moving backstage look at identity and stereotypes cracks open searing truths about the American theater that remain heartbreakingly contemporary.

Director Dawn M. Simmons says, “Have you ever read something so relevant, so fresh that you wondered who’s been reading your texts? That’s how I felt when I first read Trouble in Mind. It’s funny, “on time”, smart, and so maddeningly current I knew it had to be written by someone working in the theater today. But Trouble in Mind first premiered in 1955. I’ve put together a cracking team of Boston’s finest artists, and we’re gonna put on one heck of a show for you. Laugh, cry, and be outraged with us, but most importantly, be in community with us as we hold the mirror up to nature and take you back to 1950s New York, which sometimes doesn’t feel all that long ago.”

Performances begin Friday, January 12 and run through Sunday, February 4.

# Boston Arts Academy Foundation’s Champion reception in March

The Boston Arts Academy Foundation, an independent 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization that raises essential funds to augment the Boston Arts Academy budget, has announced that Hector Piña and Dr. Aisha Miller will be honored with the prestigious Champion Award at the 2024 Boston Arts Academy Foundation Champion Reception on March 21. The event will take place at the iconic House of Blues in Fenway on Lansdowne Street and will be followed by the opening night of the all-student-led performance of Simply The Best! The Life and Legacy of Tina Turner as told through song and dance. This year’s event will be chaired by Dylan Leavitt, founder of Studio Dylan.

The Champion Reception is one of several annual Boston Arts Academy Foundation events that raise critical funds for Boston Arts Academy. The money raised helps

provide arts programming and life-changing opportunities for students that would be otherwise unavailable to them. Each year, the Champion Award is presented to members of the community who embody the school’s commitment to the arts, scholarship, and citizenship. Previous BAAF Champion Award honorees include Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, former First Lady of Massachusetts Diane Patrick, former Boston Mayors, Kim Janey and Martin J. Walsh, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey, and former Governor Charlie Baker.

“We are thrilled to recognize two exemplary civic leaders who have worked tirelessly to impact the residents of the City of Boston,” said Boston Arts Academy Foundation President and CEO Denella J. Clark. “Hector and Aisha represent our students in so many ways, and truly are servant

leaders. Their passion and love for young people, education, and the arts are what our Champions award hopes to recognize.”

Originally from the Dominican Republic, Hector Piña is the CEO and President of Tres Islas Group Corporation and a community leader known for revolutionizing Boston’s culinary scene. Hector and his wife, Nivia Piña, have launched several acclaimed eateries including Merengue, Vejigantes, Doña Habana, and Cilantro Latin Kitchen, earning national recognition for their Dominican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban cuisines. Committed to community involvement, Hector actively serves on Boston Arts Academy Foundation’s Board of Directors and has received numerous awards for his leadership and impact on Boston’s Latino community.

Dr. Aisha Miller is currently the Vice President of Permitting, Community, and Corporate Engage-

ment at Related Beal. Dr. Miller has a diverse professional background, including serving as Boston’s Chief of Civic Engagement and holding positions in the Boston Inspectional Services Department. In addition, she has worked as a Suffolk County Probation Officer, was the Regional Steward for Suffolk County Probation Officers, and has served as an aide to political figures. Dr. Miller has received numerous leadership and community service awards, most recently the 2023 Girls’ LEAP Empowerment Champion Award.

Event Chair Dylan Leavitt is a member of the Boston Arts Academy Foundation’s Advisory Council. Leavitt is passionate about building community through education, arts, and culture. Leavitt founded Studio Dylan, a boutique production company, in 2018, and has served as a producer for PBS national television programs including “Antiques Roadshow”

and “Lidia Celebrates America.” She has also curated films at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Telluride Film Festival.

“We are grateful to be working with Dylan on our Champions Reception,” said Clark. “Dylan is a fresh, young creative force, and we are excited to be partnering with her on this event.”

After the reception, guests are invited to enjoy the opening night of Simply The Best! The Life and Legacy of Tina Turner, an entirely student-run production that will feature work and appearances from all five core arts majors at Boston Arts Academy. The show was chosen by the students because of its themes of female empowerment and resilience.

Tickets to the Champion Reception and opening night of Simply The Best! are available for \$125, while a ticket for all other

# Boston finalizes regulations to ensure large buildings achieve carbon neutrality by 2050

Mayor Michelle Wu and the City of Boston’s Environment Department have finalized regulations for Boston’s Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO). The updated regulations were adopted by the Air Pollution Control Commission during their December hearing. These rules set the standards for implementation of BERDO, which sets carbon targets for existing buildings that decrease over time with all buildings achieving net zero emissions by 2050. This vote for adoption marks the end of the third and final phase of BERDO 2.0 regulations development. Additionally, the City of Boston has invested \$3.5 million in the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund. The Equitable Emissions Investment Fund is an innovative funding tool that will support emissions reduction projects in Boston buildings, while prioritizing benefits to Boston’s environmental justice communities.

Buildings in Boston account for nearly seventy percent of city-wide greenhouse gas emissions. BERDO buildings are responsible for five percent of the building stock in Boston and account for over forty percent of the total greenhouse gas emissions.

“Policy is only as strong as its implementation, so I’m very grateful to the team for working hard over two years to translate the landmark BERDO ordinance’s mandate into specific regulatory details that will make implementation clear and accountable, with dedicated resources to ensure equitable progress across the city,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “The official vote on these BERDO regulations marks a critical milestone and turning point in

building a greener and healthier city for everyone. The properties covered by this mandate are the 5% of buildings that comprise 40% of Boston’s total emissions, so full implementation to decarbonize this sector will be the most significant step we can take. Our charge is to lead the way on climate action for cities, and Boston will continue to accelerate decarbonization through every means possible.”

In 2021, the amended ordinance was unanimously approved by the Boston City Council with the goal of significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, encouraging efficient use of energy and water, and developing investments in a green economy. The BERDO ordinance sets emissions targets and reporting requirements for non-residential buildings greater than or equal to 20,000 square feet and residential buildings that have 15 units or more. The ordinance also established the BERDO Review Board with community representation to increase accountability and transparency, as well as an environmental-justice focused Equitable Emissions Investment Fund. In order for buildings to reduce their emissions, building owners may choose to carry out: energy efficiency improvements, switch to clean, efficient and electric heating systems, or fossil fuel free systems, purchase clean energy, and/or make alternative compliance payments into the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund. Building owners must reduce emissions from their buildings below a sector-specific emissions standard, or limit, and all buildings are expected to reach net-zero by 2050. Buildings must begin complying with these emissions limits in 2025 or 2030

depending on their size.

“The final regulations were designed to accomplish significant emissions reductions while paying attention to equity and affordability,” said Reverend Maria-ma White-Hammond, Chief of Environment, Energy and Open Space. “I am thrilled that Mayor Wu has committed to investing in the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund that will ensure that environmental justice communities have the resources needed to decarbonize and retrofit their buildings.”

The finalized regulations range from topics that address complex building portfolios, individual compliance schedules, hardship compliance plans, fines and enforcement, compliance with emissions standards, and the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund. The new investment fund will collect all alternative compliance payments and penalties made to BERDO and invest them in local building carbon abatement projects that support environmental action while directing funds towards environmental justice communities. In addition to funding carbon reduction projections in buildings, projects supported by the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund may have supporting benefits including improving or promoting affordable housing and tenant protections, local air quality improvement, indoor environmental quality and health for building tenants, economic inclusion, training, and technical assistance for Minority, Women, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (MWDBE) and cooperative contractors, equitable workforce development training programs for residents who have been disproportionately impacted by the

effects of climate change, projects with community ownership of housing and renewable energy infrastructure, and reduced energy burdens. All funding awards will be overseen by the BERDO Review Board, a nine-member independent board of volunteers who monitor, enforce, and make decisions on the day-to-day operations of BERDO. The Review Board is charged with ensuring projects funded by the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund directly benefit the communities that disproportionately bear the burden of climate change.

The regulations and policies that guide the implementation of BERDO were developed in collaboration with a Community Advisory Group composed of ten community-based organizations and leaders in environmental justice, climate action, affordable housing, workforce development, and social justice. Community leaders frequently collaborated with the City to identify the potential impacts of BERDO on environmental justice communities and to provide advice on how to integrate equity into the rules of BERDO. Additionally, over the past two years, the Environment Department hosted seven working sessions and thirteen focus groups with hospital and healthcare institutions, commercial and multifamily real estate, affordable housing, cultural institutions, universities, Boston residents, and various other stakeholders across the City.

“With the finalized regulations for BERDO, the City of Boston is taking a crucial step to equitably achieve net zero emissions by 2050,” said Lee Matsueda, Acting Chair of the BERDO Review Board. “I am grateful to the

Mayor, the Environment Department team, and all of my colleagues on the Review Board for working to secure a just transition to a more sustainable future.”

The ordinance was originally passed in May 2013, and required large buildings to report their energy and water use to the City of Boston every year. The ordinance required the City of Boston to make this data publicly available. This revised ordinance is the single most impactful initiative to curb Boston’s carbon emissions. Building owners or managers who are looking for technical support in complying with BERDO can contact retrofit@boston.gov.

Mayor Wu recently announced the City of Boston’s new rates for the Boston Community Choice Electricity (BCCE) program, which is the largest municipal aggregation program in the commonwealth. Customers may choose to “opt up” to enroll in the Optional Green 100 rate, with 100% of electricity coming from local, renewable energy sources, like solar or wind. By opting up, customers can support the City of Boston in reducing carbon emissions, improving local air quality, and taking climate action within our communities. BCCE Green 100 is one compliance pathway that residents can choose to pursue in alignment with the 2025 compliance deadline. Boston Community Choice Electricity’s Optional Green 100 plan costs less than Eversource’s basic residential rate while utilizing 100% renewable electricity compared to Eversource’s 22%, which is the state requirement for renewable electricity. Residents and business owners can opt-up, down, or out of BCCE at any time with no penalties.

## ARTS (from pg. 3)

performances is \$25. Proceeds from the event will directly support BAA’s arts programming. For more information about sponsorships and to purchase tickets for all performances of Simply The Best!, visit <https://bostonartsacademy.org/foundation/event/champion-reception-2024>

Boston Arts Academy Foundation, an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was established in 1999 to raise essential funds for Boston Arts Academy,

the city’s only public high school for the visual and performing arts. Each year Boston Arts Academy Foundation must bridge the gap between the school’s allocation from Boston Public Schools and the true cost of a high-quality education that is both arts-intensive and college preparatory. Support from foundations, corporations, and individual donors is crucial to the school’s ability to offer a comprehensive arts and academic education.

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# Officials call for action on child care legislation in East Boston

Photos & Story by Marianne Salza

East Boston Social Centers, in collaboration with Charlestown Nursery, presented the Common Start Regional Event on December 18 to explain how the \$1.5 billion initiative will improve the lives of parents and children by helping them thrive in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Elected officials and educators proposed creating more affordable childcare and increasing pay for early educators to advance economic growth.

“We are fighting for the Common Start vision to ensure that all families have access to affordable, high quality education and childcare,” affirmed emcee, Representative Adrian Madaro, co-sponsor for Common Start legislation. “Common Start addresses several key principles: it provides financial assistance to enable more families to afford and access high quality, early education. It prioritizes families at or below 85% of the state median income. It calls for significant increases in pay for early educators, and provides funding for providers to cover costs that are not met by subsidy reimbursement rates and parent fees.”

Additionally, the bill includes elements to increase racial and gender equity in the early educa-



Educators, elected officials, and parents gathering for the Common Start Regional Event at East Boston Social Centers on December 18.

tion and childcare field, such as loan forgiveness, grant fairness, and cultural competence and bias training.

“I recognize for young parents, this is the first time you’re trusting strangers with the care and education of your children. That can be daunting and overwhelming,”

acknowledged Madaro, father of two, young sons. “It’s one of the most important decisions we can make early on, as parents. We want all families to have access to quality childcare, regardless of their ability to pay; and a workforce that feels respected and valued for the critical work they do in providing the foundation for the future of our children.”

More than 20,000 children in Massachusetts are on a waiting list for a childcare subsidy, according to Madaro, who feels that imme-

diately, long-term funding is necessary to provide all children with an equal start in life.

Madaro noticed that the high cost of childcare is causing families to relocate out of Massachusetts, and believes that the issue has become a threat to the economic competitiveness of the state.

“We’ve heard from constituents here in East Boston – mostly women – who, coming out of the pandemic, were ready to work in the early education sector; yet couldn’t afford to send their own kids to daycare,” Madaro revealed.

Many early education and childcare providers are finding it difficult to remain open and maintain fully-staffed classrooms. Employers are struggling because

their staff is unable to find affordable, early childcare; and educators are leaving their positions due to low wages.

“Our workforce is changing over dramatically because people can’t support themselves. People who are in the early education workforce are often the people in public assistance programs. It is outrageous that this is just a stepping stone and not a career,” admonished Senator Sal DiDomenico. “Half the group stays for 20 years because they love the work and have found a way to make it work; then there is the other half that turns over every year. We have to change that narrative. We’re on the cusp of something big. It’s important to stand united in this.”

(CHILD CARE Pg. 7)



Pegah Rouhani and James Wu, of the Common Start Coalition.



Jaqueline Carmenatty, Sprouts Early Child Care, East Boston Social Centers, with her student, Luca Buccella, explaining what he loves about class.



Thara Fuller, Executive Director, John F. Kennedy Family Service Center, Mary Dooley, Center Director, East Boston Head Start, and Representative Jeff Turco.



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## CHILD CARE *(from pg. 6)*

East Boston has one of the fastest growing youth populations; and according to Senator Lydia Edwards, families are larger than in any other section of the City of Boston. She believes that Common Start is vital for families to remain in the state, and that early childcare opportunities are important to teach children about life skills.

"It's a cycle of affordability. Families don't know what to do. Do they pick up another shift to pay the rent, but then have to find a place for their children," questioned Edwards. "Afterschool programming is a supplement for kids who do not necessarily have love, or may not have a home to go to. It's a place for them to feel safe."

Provider, Thara Fuller, Executive Director, John F. Kennedy Family Service Center, also believes that increasing professional development is critical to having the tools to address the needs of children and staff.

"The childcare system is not just for people with kids – it's a whole infrastructure," declared Fuller. "We need business partners, too. We need to all work together. It is essential."

Single mother of three, Jaqueline Carmenatty – accompanied by her Sprouts Early Childcare student, Luca -- has worked at East Boston Social Centers for 19 years, and expressed how the organization has made an impact for her family.

"This journey has been meaningful in my life," shared Carmenatty. "I recently became a home owner; and because of the

pay rate that this provides me, I have comfortability."

East Boston Social Centers has been supporting the community for 105 years. Today it serves 161 early learners and 159 children in its school-age program. Ninety percent of families receive a form of financial support based on income or other needs.

"We provide high quality curriculum, robust family engagement, transportation, and high quality meals, provided and prepared on

site," described Justin Pasquariello, Executive Director, East Boston Social Centers. "We're grateful to our partners and supporters in legislation, who have made historic investments in the field. We're fortunate to be in Massachusetts and have this great commitment. The work is not done. There is a need for high quality, affordable, early education and care for all children, taught by equitably-paid teachers."



*Members of the community and early education gathering for the Common Start Regional Event at East Boston Social Centers on December 18.*



*Senator Sal DiDomenico describing his outrage over the dramatic work force changeover each year because of low wages in the early education system.*



*Kristen McSwain, Senior Advisor and Director, Office of Early Childhood, suggesting opportunities for early childcare educators to earn free associate or bachelor degrees.*



*Senator Lydia Edwards expressing that Common Start is vital to encourage families to remain in the state and thrive.*

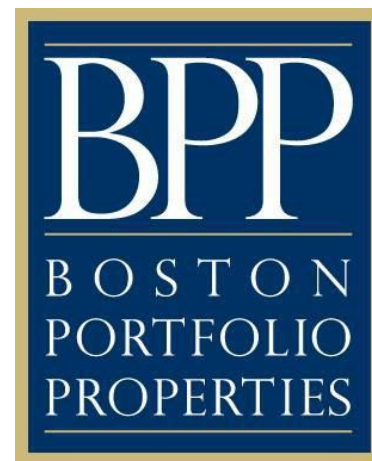


*Newtowne School parent and treasurer of the board of directors, Jay Dave, a parent of a 4-year-old, is an advocate for sustainable, predictable funding.*



*Justin Pasquariello, Executive Director, East Boston Social Centers.*

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# FIRST NIGHT BOSTON PARADE DRAWS RESIDENTS FROM ALL COMMUNITIES

Photos & Story by Marianne Salza

Thousands of residents from throughout the Commonwealth gathered along Tremont Street to cheer for the First Night Boston Parade, on December 31. The display featured over 100 puppets from Boston Puppeteers Cooperative, brass bands, Chinese dragons, and crowds clad in festive, light-up, “2024” headbands.

“Everything is alright in life if you can make it to First Night Boston. I’m holding a light – and light represents hope,” said Sandy Joneck-Schiff, Winthrop resident. “It’s about celebrating Boston. All the communities get together. You come with family, friends, you meet people, go out to eat, and you’re jiving to the music.”

Joneck-Schiff has been attending First Night Boston since 1976, when she remembers fire pits being lit in Boston Common. For her, participating in the New Year’s Eve celebration marks the beginning of a prosperous and healthy new year.



Campbell Kaynor, of Melrose, playing the Irish tune, “Kid on the Mountain, on violin, in City Hall Plaza.



A dragon from the Greater Boston Chinese Cultural Association, making its way along Tremont Street.



Krisztian Gado and Courtney Chan, of Waltham.



Jordan Brown with Hatch, Betsy and Steve James, of Beacon Hill, Heather and Hayes Brown, 2-years-old.



Bridget Liang, of Newton, twirling a dragon ribbon in front of a Chinese “Happy New Year” sign on City Hall Plaza.



Nel Blinman, of East Boston, Rew Denneno, of Downtown Boston, Kaleb McCauley, of Taunton, and Katelyn Norwood, former East Boston resident.



# FIRST NIGHT BOSTON PARADE DRAWS RESIDENTS FROM ALL COMMUNITIES



*Boxford and Belmont residents, Alana, Kat, and Stephen, enjoying the First Night Boston Parade.*



*Hot Tamale Brass Band performing in the First Night Boston Parade on the corner of Tremont and Winter Streets.*



*Neil Nagpaul, MacKenzie and Isabell Moran, of Grafton.*



*Viola Giangregorio, of Revere, and Paula DiMartino, of Winthrop.*



*A girl waving the wings of a bird puppet, one of over 100 Boston Puppeteers Cooperative puppets used by community members during First Night Boston Parade.*



*Boxford and Belmont residents, Alana, Kat, and Stephen, enjoying the First Night Boston Parade.*



*Mayor Michelle Wu waving to families outside the Park Street Congregational Church on Tremont Street during the First Night Boston Parade on December 31.*



*Parade goes on the corner of Tremont Park Street making their way toward the First Night Boston fireworks display.*



# Greater Boston bikeshare system plans to add 750 ebikes to growing fleet

The cities of Boston, Cambridge, Somerville and Everett, the town of Brookline, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (“Blue Cross”) and Lyft today announced plans to integrate 750 next-generation ebikes into Greater Boston’s popular Bluebikes program and the renewal of Blue Cross’ title sponsorship through May 2031. The rollout will begin with 50 ebikes hitting the street this week; an additional 700 will join the fleet in subsequent months.

The new seven-year agreement between Blue Cross and the municipal owners further cements a dynamic public-private partnership for sustainable urban transportation. Blue Cross will continue its commitment to promoting the overall health and well-being of Massachusetts residents by supporting the municipal owners of

Bluebikes in driving system growth and accessibility through initiatives including station expansions, system enhancements and the integration of ebikes.

“Today marks an exciting milestone as we usher in the next wave of transportation in Greater Boston with the introduction of state-of-the-art e-bikes,” Boston Mayor Michelle Wu said. “Partnerships such as our Bluebikes alliance with Blue Cross are crucial in ensuring our residents have access to healthier, more sustainable, and affordable transportation options. We look forward to continued collaboration with Blue Cross and all our municipal partners as we elevate our bike share system.”

“Bluebikes have become an integral part of so many communities in and around Boston, and we are thrilled to continue support-

ing the system,” said Blue Cross President and CEO Sarah Iselin. “We’re looking forward to the next chapter of partnership with the cities and towns through the renewal of our Bluebikes sponsorship. Biking is truly one of the best ways to get around, benefiting the environment as well as our mental and physical health. And adding ebikes to the Bluebikes system is an important step toward making biking more accessible to more people.”

The new collection of ebikes is expected to grow the overall Bluebikes fleet to 5,000 bikes across 500 stations by next summer. Funding for the initial purchase of the ebikes came from a combination of municipal investment from Boston and Cambridge, state funding, federal funding by the Boston Area Metropolitan Plan-

ning Organization and support from Blue Cross’s sponsorship of the bikeshare system. Together, Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, and Blue Cross will provide support for affordable user costs of ebikes for Bluebikes members.

The state’s largest health plan became Bluebikes’ title sponsor in 2018. Since the inception of the Bluebikes partnership, the municipal owners – in conjunction with Blue Cross – have made investments, received grants and fostered station sponsorships to accomplish system milestones, including:

- Expanding the system from four to 13 municipalities, representing a 225% increase
- Supporting a 333% growth in the number of available Bluebikes and a 150% expansion in the number of Bluebikes stations
- Bolstering the income-eligible program
- Surpassing 22 million rides taken

“The City of Cambridge is proud to support more affordable, sustainable, and healthier forms of transportation and extend what has been a win-win public-private partnership,” said Cambridge City Manager Yi-An Huang. “Bluebikes have become a critical part of Cambridge’s public transportation system and I am excited that the system is becoming even more accessible through the addition of ebikes to the Bluebikes fleet, which will open up the system to more older adults, people with disabilities, and others who may find traditional bikes hard to pedal. It will also create more opportunities for individuals seeking to maximize their time and access to our busy communities, while reducing traffic congestion.”

Lyft’s ebike was named one of TIME’s 100 Best Inventions of 2022. It features a long-lasting battery with a 60-mile range, a user-friendly interface LCD screen, a smoother ride and numerous safety upgrades. Massachusetts legalized Class 1 ebikes, which have no throttle and a maximum speed of 20 MPH, as part of the Transportation Bond Bill last year.

Unlike traditional pedal bikes, ebikes aren’t permitted on sidewalks; they can be used on shared paths and bike lanes. Riders must follow all traffic laws and regulations and must bike in the same direction of traffic except on specially marked streets. Riders must always yield to pedestrians, maintain a safe speed and remain aware of all street users of all abilities.

“Somerville takes great pride in our regional, public-owned Bluebikes system, which is already one of the most successful bikeshare systems in North America,” said Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. “Bikeshare is public transit, and I believe that affordable, pedal-assist ebikes can improve travel choices for people across the metro region.”

“Bluebikes is getting our newest ebike, which has cutting-edge features that riders love,” said Caroline Samponaro, VP of Public Policy, Lyft. “These ebikes make it easier than ever for people to reach jobs, family, and friends with sustainable, climate-friendly transportation that gets cars off our roads. I want to thank Mayor Wu, all the Bluebikes municipal owners, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts for their continued investment and partnership in Bluebikes. Without them, Bluebikes wouldn’t be the tremendous success it is today.”

The municipal owners have prioritized access and affordability for the new Bluebikes ebikes, which will be available at \$0.10 per minute for Bluebikes members, \$0.25 per minute for Adventure Pass holders, and \$0.07 per minute for low-income residents enrolled in Bluebikes’ Income-Eligible Program. Income-eligible riders are provided a reduced annual fee for Bluebikes. Earlier this year, Boston also announced the Boston Bikes Pass, which is a Bluebikes membership offered only to City of Boston residents at a reduced annual rate of \$60. Learn more discounted Bluebikes rates at <https://www.boston.gov/departments/boston-bikes/discounted-bluebikes>.



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*While faith is the binding element in Catholic schools, the Church reiterates that parents are the first teachers of their children. Holding this tenet, Catholic school communities expand beyond the walls of school buildings to envelop the family as an integral part of the school community. Together teachers, administrators, staff, students and parents fuel the light of faith by integrating culture with faith and faith with living.*

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**For further information, please contact:**

**Thara Fuller, Executive Director**

**[tfuller@kennedycenter](mailto:tfuller@kennedycenter) 617-241-8866**



COUNCIL (from pg. 1)

president, Louijeune outlined a vision for the city of Boston that addresses historic inequities while envisioning a future that welcomes everyone to the table. From addressing barriers to homeownership, to creating stronger models for waste collection in all of our neighborhoods, to ensuring that every BPS student has the tools they need to reach their full potential, and working with our unions to make sure that Boston is a city that continues to put people before profit.

Louijeune recognized and offered flowers to her predecessor, Ed Flynn, who served as president during her first term in office. She also welcomed new colleagues Enrique Pepen, John Fitzgerald, Henry Santana, and Ben Weber.

During Louijeune's first term, she met the moment with passion, work ethic, and deep love for Boston. She successfully led

the council through the tumultuous redistricting process, passing a map that met standards set by a federal court order. As Chair of the Committee on Civil Rights and Immigrant Advancement, she pushed for additions in the budget, securing funds for fair housing testers, a municipal wage study, expanding the Office of Returning Citizens, increased housing support for vulnerable populations, and initiatives for affordable

homeownership. She has been an advocate for legalizing beekeeping citywide, increasing the frequency of trash pickup for cleaner streets, and actively works to bridge gaps and distribute resources to every neighborhood.

As president, Louijeune is committed to building on her previous work, while uplifting the issues that her colleagues hold dearly.

"One thing to know about me is that I unequivocally reject any

zero-sum mentality that suggests that for one group to succeed, another must lose," Louijeune stated.

The newly-sworn in council is a profound representation of the vibrancy and diversity that makes up Boston. Louijeune is hopeful that during her tenure, this body will embrace different perspectives and lived experiences, while also acting as a strong collective voice for the people of Boston.

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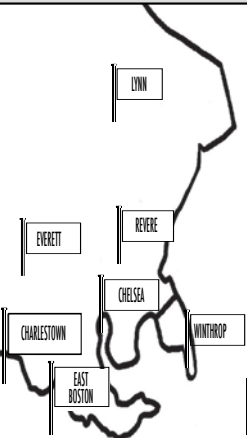
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