City government roars back into action for 2019 and beyond

By Jim Clark

While the federal government remains deep in the throes of a (hopefully) temporary “shutdown,” the same cannot be said for local municipalities such as ours. And so, the City of Somerville emerged from its deep winter holiday break this week to forge ahead with the business of the people and its environs.

Public officials gathered for an “organizational meeting” on Monday night in the city’s Aldermanic Chambers to elect officers, adopt rules, and deliver addresses, all in the spirit of beginning the year anew.

The Board of Aldermen – soon to be known as the City Council – re-elected Ward 7 Alderman Katjana Ballantyne to her second consecutive term as Board President, an accomplishment never before achieved by a woman in the city’s history.

Mayor Curtatone offered his views on the state of the city and how public policy should be shaped in the year to come at Monday night’s organizational meeting.

Welcoming the Co-Incidence Festival

An experimental music gathering in Somerville

The Co-Incidence Festival is a gathering of experimental composer-performers for ten days hosted by Non-Event at Washington St. Gallery in Somerville.

The project is based on an expanded view of what constitutes art, music, and the traditional concert. Following the example of the revolutionary arts community Black Mountain College, it will bring together a group of radical artists operating in the boundary-zones of their practice to take part in a residency curated as “social sculpture.”

Reflecting the values of experimental music, Co-Incidence will be allowed to grow organically, strongly influenced by the artists who attend: the directors simply provide a time, space, and loose framework.

This year, the festival will follow a set of maps that score the flow of concepts and events, by way of nomadic movement through the structure of the Residency. Only certain major meeting points (arrival, departure, Welcoming) will be marked in advance: the core of the festival will be improvised, as it follows the ever-changing trajectory of the project.

The Co-Incidence Festival runs from January 11–19 at the Washington Street Art Center, 321 Washington St., Somerville.
Happy birthday this week to several locals: Happy birthday to a well-known sort of historian and good guy, Matt Hoy. We wish him the very best on this his birthday week. Happy birthday to former East Somerville, now Magoun Sq., sign guy, Dominick Silvestri Jr. We wish him the very best. Happy birthday to Theresa Rodrigues, who is celebrating this week. Happy birthday to one of nicest ladies, Bonnie Raboin Careiger, who is also celebrating this week. Happy birthday as well to a good guy, Ken Sprague. Finally, to one of Somerville’s finest first responders and all around nice guy, Kevin O’Donovan, who is one of our best firemen. We wish him a great birthday. Happy birthday to everyone here and from the city who is celebrating this week. We wish every one of them a very happy birthday.

A third East Somerville Reunion is set for this year. Dan Rogovics has let us know he is once again planning for it. Lots of people who grew up in East Somerville have missed the last two but wanted to be there for the third. Dan, who is an East Somerville lover, managed to get the Somerville City Club booked on Saturday, June 15. He and his assistants worked hard on the previous two reunions and they will do the same this year to make this one a success. We here at The Times are from East Somerville and we will be there, and we have already reached out to others. A small group of “down backers” behind the Bucket who grew up there in the 60’s will all be there. They meet every four or so months nowadays to talk about old times and the great times. Help make this a success. Go online to Facebook and check it out. Ask Dan what you can do to help. He is looking for the food, entertainment and just plain East Somerville fun. Charlestown line to McGrath Hwy. is considered East Somerville, which includes Glen Park, Florence Somerville fun. Charlestown line to McGrath Hwy. is considered East Somerville, which includes Glen Park, Florence

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**Comments of the Week**

**Response to: Countdown to yesteryear**

Leo Connerty says:

Forgot some of those places Jimmy...so I'd like to forget...or some a foggy memory!!!

Great column ... keep them coming

Dolly says:

Those were the days. Great piece of nostalgia for me. Thank you

Jo-Ann says:

Thanks for the memories! I didn’t go out on New Year’s Eve back then...I was home raising two young children. But I do remember the Sherlock Holmes Pub, my former husband used to go there all the time. I was just recently told that there was no such place! But now you made it public, so it was! My sister worked at The Embassy. So there were a lot of memories remembered. Thanks!

**Response to: Somerville’s Board of Aldermen to become City Council**

Noel Effurn says:

Congratulations to all the new Councilmen!

Caitlin says:

They said they were going to make housing more affordable! My rent went up another $100 in September!

**Response to: Somerville seeking Somervision 2040 committee members**

Highlander says:

Feels like we just finished the last one. Who asked for an update? Developers? The mayor's got some explaining to do. This feels like another snow job from City Hall planners.

DatGruntled says:

The Aldermen are still dragging their feet on most of the last Somervision. How many more thousands of hours of ours of our time are going to be wasted?

Somerville lifer says:

Since the village idiots voted to raise our taxes for “open space and affordable housing” has anyone seen any increase in Somerville. I have seen the enemy and it is us.

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**Healey Schoolyard community meeting**

Please join the Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development and Ward 4 Alderman Jesse Clingan for a community meeting on Thursday, January 10 to discuss design plans for the Healey Schoolyard.

The meeting is scheduled for 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. in the Healey School cafeteria, 5 Meacham St. For more info or with any questions about the project, please contact Arn Fransen at AFRanzen@somervillema.gov.
Heinekens and home fries

Boston's own Performing Fusion Theatre in Somerville invites submissions for the Somerville Theatre Festival on April 18, 21, 26 and 27. They are looking for short plays, 10 minutes or less, to showcase at the Festival for a four day run. Five finalists will be chosen and the winning playwrights will have their work cast, produced and staged by Performing Fusion Theatre at the Rockwell. The deadline for submissions is February 15.

To quote the Tool’s 1978 single Spark Em Up, “When we party, we party hearty, and when we boogie, we boogie woogie.” And when we’re hungry, watch out! Somerville was always a big party city, especially over the past few decades. Lots of bars, clubs and posts kept us very busy on the weekends. We put on our best clothes and hit the night spots. We drank, inhaled second hand smoke, and partied on the weekends. We became zombies. “We need coffee, we need eggs! Sausage! Home fries!”

The cast of characters included the waitresses and staff, but featured the loud, boorish, half in the bag buffoons and their friends. He, she or they usually used offensive, vulgar language and ended up picking fights. Then for act two, the cops showed up and escorted the unruly patrons away.

Breakfast and a show! If you spent the evening at The Surrey Room or any of the other Davis Square night spots, you just had a small distance to go to reach the delicious doors of Kay and Chips. It was known as being “within stumbling distance.” Kay and Chips, formerly at the corner of Highland and Currier, was my favorite. My DD. My designated diner.

They squeezed a lot of inebriated late night action into a small space, and we loved it! I saw my first flying metal napkin dispenser at The Golden Egg.

No matter where you went, Kay and Chips, Holyos’ or The Egg, you were sure to find people you knew. Some were notorious. You’d usually find drama too. I was always amazed how fast the staff could clean up broken glass, spilled syrup, and stained tablecloths. There always seemed to be a couple of tables of people that were drunker and louder than the rest. The Perfect Storm of a night of drinking, followed by serious hangovers fueled true life situation comedy. I’m glad that I experienced memorable breakfasts at all three of the aforementioned spots.

Howard Johnsons in Medford was right across from The MDC Police Station, so when an altercation occurred the MDC showed up PDQ.

Today, there are around 30 or so restaurants in Davis Square and vicinity but none are packed at three in the morning like those breakfast spots of old.

The crazy weekend food fests seem to have been replaced with calmer brunches and conventional breakfasts. Our memorable late night/early morning ronps were replaced by raising kids and giving our livers a well-deserved break.

And, just for the record, man buns are out and cinnamon buns are in.

The Somerville Theatre Festival invites calls for short plays
Unwelcome customer unwilling to be identified

Police officers were dispatched to the bifresh Market on Elm St. Sunday morning on reports of an unwanted person on the premises.

Upon arrival, the officers met with the reporting party, the manager of the market, who stated there was person who was sleeping while seated at a table on the Dunkin’ Donuts side of the store, and that he was to be trespassed.

A previous manager had reportedly asked the man, later identified as Shawn Moore, of Dorchester, to leave multiple times, but he refused to do so.

The officer approached Moore and asked him to identify himself. He reportedly stated that he was leaving and therefore did not have to identify himself.

Moore was asked if he had any form of identification on his person, and he said that he did not.

When asked for his name and date of birth and he supplied false information, according to police. The officers reportedly provided multiple opportunities for Moore to give his real name and date of birth.

According to reports, customers began gathering and becoming spectators, as Moore’s behavior became boisterous. He was subsequently informed by the officers that he was interfering with an investigation and that they needed to identify him in order to trespass him from the property.

After once again refusing to identify himself, Moore was informed that he was being placed under arrest for interfering with a police investigation and disorderly conduct.

Upon conducting an inventory search of the outermost compartment of Moore’s backpack, there was what seemed to be a pill bottle. When asked what the pill bottle contained, he reportedly stated that it was someone’s medication. He also stated that he had another bottle of pills.

Both these bottles were labeled as belonging to someone with a female name. Moore reportedly said it was his mother’s name, that he does not have medical insurance, and that his mother gets the prescription for him.

The officers were reportedly unable to identify the pills.

Moore was placed under arrest and charged with disturbing the peace and witness intimidation.

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McLaughlin was likewise re-elected to serve as Vice-President of the Board.

For School Committee, both Chair Carrie Normand and Vice-Chair Emily Ackman were re-elected to their positions.

Following addresses by Ballantyne and Normand, Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone offered his thoughts on where the city and its leaders are headed as they face the challenges that lie ahead in the year to come.

The mayor led off by thanking the members of the Board and other officials for making 2018 a productive year for the city.

“2018 was a tumultuous year nationally, but a very productive one here locally. So I want to first thank the Board, our community leaders, our involved residents, our student leaders, and the city’s incredibly hard-working staff for the extraordinary efforts and progress we made on city goals together,” said the mayor.

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The mayor went on to discuss his own personal recent health issues and relate them to a city government’s responsibility to care for its constituents in their times of need.

“Want I want to stress tonight is that city government is also an institution that needs to be there for people at their most vulnerable moments. As we strive to run our city, deliver services, and maintain our infrastructure, we have residents in need of housing, food, jobs and dependable ways to move around,” Curtatone said.

The mayor also spoke of the need to focus on climate change and how best to counteract the damage that has been done thus far.

“Young people at attention to the news know we continue to receive dire reports about the vulnerability of our climate. We recently unveiled our community-driven Climate Forward plan, which commits us to stripping greenhouse gas emissions out of our city,” said Curtatone. “We are pooling so much energy, setting up programs to convert heating and cooling systems in rental buildings, and looking to distribute electric vehicle charging stations throughout the city. And we are keeping in mind that climate change will affect everyone, but it will not affect everyone equally.”

The mayor emphasized the need to improve the city’s tree canopy and open spaces. “Together with the Board of Aldermen, we are gearing up to grow and protect our tree canopy through every part of Somerville. Their approval of another urban forestry position means that in 2019 we will double our capacity to keep our tree canopy growing and our existing trees healthy.”

Mayor Curtatone also touched on the improvements being made in transportation and safety in the city.

“Great public transit connects workers to better jobs, and it also keeps the air cleaner for all of us. 35% of our city’s carbon footprint comes from motor vehicles. The GLX will change that radically when it comes online, but we can do more,” the mayor said.

To read a full transcript of the mayor’s speech, go online to our website at www.thesomervilletimes.com or visit the city’s website at www.somervillema.gov.
By Alderman-At-Large Stephanie Hirsch and Ward 5 Alderman Mark Niedergang

Residents reach out to us constantly about their frustrations and fear regarding traffic. Different people are aggravated by different aspects of traffic. Here’s some of what we hear:

• I can’t get out of my driveway and have started making doctors’ appointments only for the middle of the day… It took me 20 minutes to get through Union Square… It took me a half-hour to drive from Porter to Sullivan.

• My kids can’t get to a class nearby because I think it’s too dangerous for them to walk through Union or Davis on their own.

• The traffic light signaling changes are supposed to make things better… but my impression is they make things worse.

• I’m afraid that people who drive are not paying attention… I’m afraid that pedestrians are not paying attention… When I’m driving, there are too many things to pay attention to on the streets.

• The commuter traffic on my block backs up so far that the air gets hazy from exhaust.

• I’d love to bicycle around, but I’m scared, it doesn’t feel safe.

Traffic tops the list of quality-of-life concerns in Somerville (except, perhaps, for frustration with rats in some neighborhoods). Traffic problems appear to be overwhelming. But changes are happening that make us optimistic that a lot more progress will be made in the next five years than in the past five.

What’s causing our traffic problems?

One cause is the sheer volume of cars on our streets. A majority of cars being driven on our streets come from and go to somewhere outside of Somerville. That includes about 20,000 cut-through vehicles that pass through Union Square, 130,000 on I-93, and approximately 80 percent of all drivers at busy times and locations. The volume has increased along with the increase in traffic in greater Boston. More drivers are trying to find a way through Somerville around the traffic jams on I-93. Somerville Police Traffic Officers report that, at least anecdotally, the non-local commuters are more distracted and more likely to speed or skirt laws.

Another issue that’s aggravating traffic is construction. This cause, we hope, will be temporary. Detours, road closures, dirt and gravel-covered streets … they are driving all types of travelers crazy. But at least they come with an eventual reward. (Note: If you have a construction-related issue or travel question you can email: construction@somervillema.gov)

How can we make a dent in the traffic problems?

We have been meeting monthly since January 2018 with a group of residents who care deeply about making streets and sidewalks safer for all, and about relieving the traffic congestion that hurts our quality of life. We are so grateful for these residents who spend significant time working on traffic issues, including members of a group called Staying Put, who are trying to make sure that seniors and others with mobility issues can safely navigate our sidewalks and streets.

In addition to this effort, Mark chairs the Board of Aldermen (BOA) Traffic and Parking Committee. (Mark also represents the BOA on the City’s Traffic Commission, a little-known five-member Board that makes many of the important decisions about specific traffic and parking details in Somerville.) Mark has tried to focus on not just the very long laundry list of traffic problems, but on the big picture challenges, like staffing and infrastructure investment, that affect how much progress we can make.

The Administration and the BOA made a significant investment in 2018, almost doubling the traffic planning staff, thanks in large part to the advocacy and support of members of the public. The Mayor has also given the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development transport planning team both more resources and more responsibilities to tackle traffic planning issues. These extra resources have brought a much more flexible, creative, contemporary, and problem-solving approach to solving traffic issues.

We and the Administration share a focus on reducing traffic-related deaths, and the City’s new Vision Zero initiative addresses this objective. In particular, the planning process looks to increase the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, who are most likely to experience traffic-related injuries and deaths in Somerville.

However, we know that the entire system of streets and traffic requires steady to improve life for people who travel by foot, bicycle, car, or bus/subway … and in most cases a mix of these methods.

We are working with the Administration on the following approaches:

• A staffed Pedestrian and Transit Committee: Our top request, along with the residents we’ve been working with, is to have a resident advisory committee that focuses on traffic and transit issues. It should be modeled after the hugely effective Somerville Bicycle Committee that has helped the Administration make enormous progress on bike infrastructure.

• Real-time traffic engineering with experimentation: In response to input from residents, a fully-staffed Traffic and Infrastructure Division can collect data, test out different traffic-calming strategies, monitor how those experiments worked, and report back to the community. This will be, we hope, a virtuous cycle.

• More enforcement: In a recent East Somerville traffic enforcement effort, a Somerville Police Department traffic control officer said, “The officers report that the area is literally ‘out of control’ with violations which occurred directly in front of them even though they were there with blue lights activated as a warning to motorists not to commit a violation.” This feedback shows how much more we could do in the enforcement of traffic laws. Key violations to enforce include speeding and distracted driving, which cause many fatal or serious accidents nationwide. The Administration should add more Police resources for enforcement, including enforcement of bicycle laws, in particular when they impact pedestrians.

• More investment:

Moving forward on calming and reducing traffic

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Custom home built in 1978, Dutch Gambrel w/ deck that overlooks Boston!
The Legislature convened the 2019-2020 session on January 9, 2019. Last week was full of activity on Beacon Hill. The Legislature approved and sent to Gov. Charlie Baker several bills passed on voice votes, without roll calls, prior to the end of the 2017-2018 session on Tuesday, January 1.

The Legislature convened the 2019-2020 session on Wednesday, January 2. Most of the day’s activity was ceremonial with the exception of the election of a speaker of the House and Senate president.

Gov. Baker also delivered his annual State of the State address.

HOUSE RE-ELECTS DELeo AS SPEAKER

House 120-31, re-elected Rep. Bob DeLeo (D-Winthrop) to a sixth term as speaker of the House. Rep. Bradley Jones (R-North Reading) received the votes of 31 of the 32 Republicans and was re-elected GOP minority leader. Rep. Shaunna O’Connell (R-Taunton) was absent.

DeLeo received the votes of 119 of the 128 Democrats. One Democratic representative was absent and eight opted not to cast a vote for speaker and voted “present.” That list included returning Reps. Jonathan Hecht, Russell Holcomb (D-Boston), John Rogers D-Norwood and Angelo Scaccia (D-Boston); along with freshmen Reps. Tami Gouveia (D-Anton), Nik Elugardo (D-Boston), Patrick Kearney (D-Scituate) and Maria Robinson (D-Framingham).

Earlier in the day at a Democratic caucus, Robinson proposed an amendment that the speaker be elected by secret ballot rather than the current system of a recorded roll call vote. Ironically, the proposal was defeated on an unrecorded voice vote. Holmes, Hecht, Elugardo and Kearney of spoke in favor of Robinson’s amendment.

Supporters of the secret ballot said members should be able to cast a vote without worrying about the next speaker knowing that he or she voted against the him or her. They noted that they were all elected by their local voters who voted in secret.

Robinson said she wanted to ensure that House lawmakers would be independent. “And it is difficult to have independence when you do not have a private ballot for one of the most important roles,” she said.

Opponents said an open ballot makes the House more transparent. They said voters deserve to hear where their elected representative voted on every matter, including the election of the most powerful man in the House.

To go to a secret ballot defies a republic,” said Rep. Tackey Chan (D-Boston).

Beacon Hill Roll Call made repeated attempts to get a comment from all eight members who voted “present.” Only Reps. Holmes, Elugardo, John Rogers, Gouveia, Kearney and Hecht responded.

We did not get a response from Reps. Scaccia and Robinson.

“My constituents, many of whom are people of color, have made it clear that I should not continue to prop up an institution that does not listen to it or show it the respect that our voting records deserve,” said Rep. Holmes. “The House of Representatives is run by Democrats. However, the leadership and its goals does not have as its highest priority the desires of its most reliable voting constituency. We should be focused on eliminating the gaps between unemployment rates and income of people of color and whites, passing foundation budget and immigration reform, and pushing forward with eliminating violence in our community by solving unsolved murders. This is why I hear over and over again in my district that folks supported Gov. Baker at unexpected levels. He has been in the district many times and listens, values and respects our perspective as reforms are rolled out from his administration.”

“I voted present because I believe we need a new direction in the House,” said Rep. Hecht. “We need to make the House truly democratic by opening up the lawmaking process and giving an equal voice to all members and the communities they represent.”

“I would only vote for a candidate who would make a public statement about their vision for reforming House culture and House rules, and in the absence of such a statement by any candidate I would have to vote ‘present’,” said Rep. Elugardo. “Any statement acknowledging the need to assess and address a culture of fear that is choking, for some reps, their ability to ask for roll calls and to call for reforms that increase transparency and robust debate would have sufficed. But to my knowledge at the time of voting none was presented to the members.”

I voted “present” today to be consistent with my long held belief in term limits for the office of speaker of the House,” said John Rogers. “Indeed, the gentleman from Winthrop [Speaker Bob DeLeo] and I 1 year age both ran for speaker advocating for term limits for Speaker. Although I support his right to change his mind, I re- main resolute in the fundamental belief in this necessary limit on the powers of the office of speaker.”

Here’s how local representatives voted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rep. Christine Barbier</th>
<th>Voted for DeLeo</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Mike Connolly</td>
<td>Voted for DeLeo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Denise Provost</td>
<td>Didn’t Vote</td>
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SENATE RE-ELECTS SPILKA AS SENATE PRESIDENT

Senate 36-6, re-elected Sen. Karen Spilka (D-Ashland) as Senate President. Spilka received the votes of 33 of the chamber’s 34 Democrats. Sen. John Keenan (D-Quincy) was absent.

Sen. Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester) received the votes of all six Republicans and became the GOP Minority Leader.

Here’s how local senators voted:

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Voted for Spilka

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

CREDIT REPORTS (H 4806)

- The House and Senate approved and sent to Gov. Baker legislation that would prohibit consumer reporting agencies, like Equifax, Experian and TransUnion from charging fees for freezing and unfreezing a person’s credit information. Under current law, companies can and have charged up to $5 per freeze or unfreeze.

A freeze makes the report inaccessible until the consumer unfreezes it. Since banks and other lenders require access to the borrower’s credit report before giving a loan, this greatly reduces identity thieves from getting a loan or credit in another individual’s name.

The proposal gained momentum following the 2017 crisis when, from May to July, the personal information including names, social security numbers, addresses, driver’s licenses, and credit card numbers of 145 million Americans was stolen from Equifax’s systems. Equifax didn’t reveal the breach until September and consumers lose valuable time to act.

Other provisions of the bill prohibit businesses from obtaining a consumer’s credit report without obtaining written, verbal or electronic consent from the consumer; require credit monitoring services to be available for 3.5 years for some consumers affected by a breach; and improve notices and consumer information the companies are required to give.

“While these new tools will help consumers protect themselves from identity theft, it is clear that big businesses have to do a much better job at safeguarding consumers’ personal information and must be held accountable for their failures,” said Deirdre Cummings, legislative director for MASSPIRG. “Identity thieves stole more than $17 billion dollars from American consumers last year — and that number is growing.”

BAN TOXIC FLAME RETARDANTS (H 5024)

- The House and Senate approved and sent to the governor legislation that would ban 11 toxic flame retardants from children’s products, bedding, carpeting and residential upholstered furniture sold or manufactured in Massachusetts, except for inventory already manufactured prior to January 1, 2019. Another provision requires the Department of Environmental Protection to review, at least every three years, chemical flame retardants used in these products and include them on the list of prohibited chemical flame retardants that are documented to pose a health risk.

Vehicles, watercraft and aircraft are exempt from this law as are any previously-owned product that contains a prohibited retardant.

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Vehicles, watercraft and aircraft are exempt from this law as are any previously-owned product that contains a retardant. Violators would be fined up to $5,000 for a first offense and up to $50,000 for subsequent offenses.
Supporters explained that since 1975, manufacturers have added chemical flame retardants to a wide array of household items including products with polyurethane foam, such as sofas, car seats, strollers and nap mats. They are also incorporated into electronic products and building insulation.

They argued that the retardants, while well-intentioned, do more harm than good and have been linked to an increased risk of cancer, fertility problems, neurological disorders and other major health concerns.

“This law will protect the health of children and firefighters,” said bill co-sponsor Rep. Marjorie Decker (D-Cambridge). “Working with Speaker DeLeo, my partners in the Senate, firefighters and so many advocates helped increase public awareness of the connection to our well-being and how we choose to use chemicals that can lead to our deaths instead of protecting us. I am honored to have been the voice of many of the House sponsors.”

“I am so proud that this important bill will reach the governor’s desk, and we can make 2019 the year we stop allowing the sale of products with unnecessary and harmful flame-retardant chemicals,” said Sen. Cynthia Creem (D-Newton). “Working with Clean Water Action, the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts, and many other advocates helped increase public awareness and get the bill passed.”

GAS SAFETY (H 5005) – The House and Senate approved and Gov. Baker signed into law a bill requiring the state to set up a system to address the ongoing lockout of National Grid gas workers. The utility locked out more than 1,200 workers in June during a contract dispute and their unemployment benefits are scheduled to run out in January.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS (H 4988) - The House and Senate approved and Gov. Baker signed into law a bill that allows the Office of the Jury Commissioner to communicate with jurors through e-mail, testing, other electronic and telephonic ways and in-person exchanges. Current law requires the communication to be via the post office and was adopted many years ago when these other forms of communication did not exist.

I was pleased to file this legislation at the suggestion of the Office of Jury Commissioners,” said the bill’s sponsor Sen. Will Brownsberger (D-Belmont), “This legislation will allow the Office of Jury Commissioner to embrace technological improvements, reduce costs and improve juror convenience.”

THE AGE FOR PURCHASING TOBACCO PRODUCTS IS NOW 21 – A new law raising from 18 to 21 the age to legally purchase cigarettes and electronic cigarettes in the Bay State took effect last week. Other provisions ban e-cigarettes and other vape devices from the workplace and private and public school grounds and prohibit pharmacies and healthcare facilities from selling any tobacco or vape products. The new law does not make it a crime for minors to smoke but does impose penalties on retailers who sell tobacco to underage customers. It also exempts from the hikes youths who turned 18 by Dec. 31, the day the law took effect.

Prior to the hike going into effect, some 50 percent of the state’s cities and towns, including Boston, had already raised the legal age up from 18 to 21.

"Raising the minimum legal age for tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, to 21 aims to reduce tobacco use and nicotine addiction by decreasing access and exposure to these products," said...
SCES Elder Protective Services adopts new assessment tool

By Nathan Lamb

Somerville-Cambridge Elder Protective Services (SCES) is an early adopter of a new tool designed to help Elder Protective Services evaluate reports of elder abuse and neglect.

Massachusetts is the second state to adopt the Interview for Decisional Abilities. It’s a structured discussion that helps Protective Services social workers assess an elder’s ability to make decisions about safety concerns and possible interventions, explained SCES Protective Services Director Stephanie Becker.

“One of the challenges of Elder Protective Services is gauging how much insight an elder has into whatever risks they are running,” said Becker. “This tool helps us get a better understanding of that, which in turn helps us respect their right to self-determination.”

Elder Protective Services investigates reports of abuse and neglect, and works with older adults to mitigate risk factors.

Self-determination is an important component of Adult Protective Services; older adults can refuse assistance, provided they demonstrate they understand the risks. Becker said the interview can be very helpful when dealing with scenarios of self-neglect, where the capacity of an elder to make reasoned decisions is key.

“If somebody is able to exhibit insight into the risk of a given behavior and articulate reasoning about whether or not to accept an intervention, that provides us with valuable information about their ability to make that choice,” said Becker.

In practice, the interview focuses on three primary areas: general appreciation of an identified risk, appreciation of how the elder is personally at risk, and the ability to weigh pros and cons of a potential intervention.

The interview was originally developed through a partnership between the NYC Elder Abuse Center, the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging, and Weill Cornell Medicine, to assist the New York City Adult Protective Services program. The program was piloted in New York City, and Becker said both California and Vermont are looking at adopting it.

Becker is one of 10 master trainers statewide, who helped bring the program to the Boston area earlier this year. She’s currently working to bring the program to other agencies across the region, with the goal of making it available statewide.

The Protective Services Program at SCES served 272 clients over the past year.

SCES Elder Protective Services Director Stephanie Becker is a master trainer for a new protective services tool in Massachusetts.

Sharing Our Stories' support group

Sharing our Stories is a support group for families with young children who have special needs.

Join in on Thursday, January 10, 7:00-8:30 p.m. at the Cummings School building, 42 Prescott St., for the next gathering.

Raising a child who does not always fit in can be challenging. This free, open-ended group will offer adults the opportunity to share joys, concerns, frustrations, questions, and resources about their experiences.

Facilitated by Amy Bamforth, LICSW. Conversation in English; interpretation available upon request.

Dorothy’s Corner

Pan Roasted Chicken Thighs

This is a time saver for a weekday meal. The results, crispy skin and succulent meat. It’s all ready in 45 minutes! Serve with mashed potatoes and roasted carrots or asparagus or any other vegetable you like.

6 Bone-in, Skin-on Chicken Thighs
Salt
Pepper
1 Lemon, Juiced (optional, see below)
1 Tablespoon Honey (optional, see below)

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Season the skin side of the thighs with the salt and pepper and place them in a cold 12” oven safe sauté pan. It's much easier to place the thighs in a cold pan because they won't stick on contact. I highly recommend using a splatter screen to help keep your stove top clean.

Once all the thighs are placed in the pan, season the other side. Place the pan over medium heat for 2 minutes, then turn up to high for approximately 8 minutes or until the skin has browned.

Once browned, turn over the thighs, skin side up and place in the oven for 35 minutes. Once done, place the thighs on a platter.

You can serve them as is, or you can add a little more flavor to the dish by removing all but 2 tablespoons of fat from the sauté pan. Place on the stove top and squeeze the juice of one lemon into the pan along with a tablespoon of honey and blend well. Cook down for a minute or two, reducing the lemon juice. Drizzle over the thighs and serve.

Serves 3 really hungry people.

Somerville’s Board of Aldermen to become City Council

The City of Somerville’s legislative body will officially become the Somerville City Council (formerly the Board of Alderman) on January 31, 2019. The name change was approved when Gov. Charlie Baker signed a home rule petition on January 1 requesting the switch to City Council.

“I am very happy not to be called an elder man anymore,” said City Council President Katjana Ballantyne.

The process to switch from Board of Aldermen to City Council began in early 2018 when Councilor-at-Large Bill White submitted a request that the City get permission (through a home rule petition) from the state to change the name of the legislative body in the City charter.

“I am glad that the state approved the home rule petition that I had introduced last year and that on February 1, I will be a City Councilor-at-Large,” said White. “Our work certainly won’t change, but I thought it important that we adopt a modern and inclusive name for the legislative body of our city.”

Moving forward on calming and reducing traffic

To make a big impact on this big problem will require more staff which will take more funding.

• Neighborhood advocacy: You understand your own neighborhood best. We want to empower neighbors to work with City traffic planners to implement effective solutions to calm traffic and/or reduce traffic flow through small residential side streets.

• Coordination with the MBTA: Our public transportation system could be much more effective, but it is controlled by the MBTA, a state agency. For example, there is virtually no North-South public transportation route in the City. With five new Green Line stations opening in 2021 in Somerville, there will need to be some changes in bus routes. The City needs both to advocate for more and better MBTA bus service and also to be a good partner for the MBTA, such as by piloting bus-only lanes.

• Last, but certainly not least – parking: With a growing population of residents, shrinking space on our streets, and outdated regulations, the Administration must begin a community discussion about major changes in our parking policies. Many parking regulations need to change to improve the parking experience for thousands of residents. We look forward to working with the Administration and with all of you on these important public health and quality-of-life traffic challenges in 2019. With the tools that are available, the expertise of our growing City staff, additional investment, and your relentless advocacy, we can chip away at the mountain of issues and begin to see some relief.

The Somerville Theatre Festival invites calls for short plays

CONT. FROM PG 3

Plays should be designed for minimal props and have no more than four characters (two to three is preferred).

Details for Submissions:

Easy submissions are encouraged. The reading fee is $25 for a manuscript of one or two short plays and must be submitted via PayPal: https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&host=https://performingfusiontheatre.com&edd_button_id=WZTZD3XBRMSHQ&edd_transaction_number=(edd_transaction_number). Include a cover page with the playwright’s contact information, title(s) of the play(s), and a one sentence synopsis (for each play). The playwright’s name should only appear on the cover page. All submission proceed to PFT’s “Touching Myself: An Ode to Audre Lorde” 2019 South Africa Fund.

Questions or concerns should be addressed to Aishya Stephenson, Executive Director, or Brian Moore-Ward, Artistic Director, at PerformingFusionTheatre@gmail.com.

Learn more here: https://www.performingfusiontheatre.com

Follow: @PfusionTheatre

www.performingfusiontheatre.com

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone, the Health and Human Services Department and the Somerville Public Schools announce the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration event, to be held on Monday, January 21.

The annual event will be held at the East Somerville Community School, 50 Cross St., beginning at 10:00 a.m. The celebration will be emceed by Marcus Santos, and will feature musical performances by El Sistema Somerville and the Somerville High School World Percussion Ensemble, as well as readings by the winners of the student essay contest. A keynote address will be given by Aba Taylor, a social justice educator, facilitator and organizer.

This year the Somerville Human Rights Commission will hold a Winter Clothing Drive during the event. Attendees are invited to bring gently used or new winter clothes for school aged children. Donations will be distributed to the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative’s Clothing Closet.

The event is organized in cooperation with the City of Somerville’s Health and Human Services Department, Somerville Public Schools, and the Somerville Human Rights Commission.
Somerville’s work on affordable housing won’t be slowing down in 2019

By Joseph A. Curtatone

During Mayor Joseph Curtatone’s mid-term address on January 7, 2019, he discussed some of the successes and challenges Somerville has faced in battling the regional housing crisis. The excerpt below touches on some of the work done in 2018 and a look ahead at the work the City will be taking on.

In 2018 Somerville took significant strides toward addressing the affordable housing crisis we face along with the rest of the Greater Boston region. Yet we still have a lot more that remains to be done in 2019, and this could become a watershed year in terms of local action on the housing issue.

During my Inaugural Address last year I unveiled 10 strategic steps that would set Somerville far ahead of the rest of the region in dealing with housing equity. We already sit at the front line of the battle. I can’t think of anything more Somerville.

Production alone will not solve the housing crisis, but we cannot solve it without producing substantially more housing as a region. That’s why I’m proud to say that as the co-chair of the Metro Mayors Regional Housing Task Force, I took a leadership role in bringing together 15 Greater Boston communities to commit to 185,000 new units of housing over the next decade. That is a mammoth step in terms of regional cooperation, and a testament to how much everyone is feeling the pain of this housing crisis. In every single city and town in the group we’re hearing about how people are being crushed beneath the weight of runaway housing prices.

It’s not just us, and we’re no longer in this alone. But if we want to keep people in Somerville, we must increase housing locally.

Last year, we added 707 total new housing units, including 98 affordable housing units. We also approved two new large-scale projects in Assembly Square that will bring us more than 500 new units including more than 100 new affordable units thanks to our 20% inclusionary ordinance. In many other cities that would be a decade’s worth of work. In Somerville, we will treat it simply as a start toward addressing a gargantuan problem.

That brings me to the legislative end of things. With the Board of Aldermen — soon-to-be City Council — and the community, we spent many late hours working to develop a real estate transfer fee to fund affordable housing. Once approved by the state, the transfer fee will protect owner occupants and target people looking to make a business out of housing in Somerville.

I am confident that, working together, we can also deliver a modernized condo conversion ordinance in the first half of 2019 that both respects the needs of owners and the rights of tenants. Without a new ordinance, we’ll see more landlords forcing out tenants. We must add protections, particularly for those most at risk, such as the elderly, people with disabilities and those with lower and moderate incomes.

Likewise, we must regulate short-term rentals, which drive up overall rental prices. The state just passed a law on this and we have already submitted a local ordinance to work in conjunction with it. I look forward to working with the Board to pass this in 2019.

That’s three key steps within our grasp that can have immediate and sweeping impact. We also need to move forward with the Housing Land Trust, which would be able to buy property and designate it for permanent affordability. We have a working group that’s spent the past year hammering out the nuts and bolts of how to establish and operate a community-based housing trust. I want to thank them. That report is due any day now and we need to be ready to act on it.

Simply put, if we are to protect housing in Somerville, we need to see it not as a commodity but rather as a human right — and we need the rules and regulations that back that up. That brings me to zoning. Passing the proposed zoning overhaul is the backbone of everything we’re doing to impact housing.

Through zoning, we can choose right now to move away from the NIMBY model that constrains housing supply and drives up prices. Through our proposed zoning, we can increase and incentivize a more diverse housing stock in our city. And through our zoning, we can provide our families, our seniors, our makers and artists, our younger households, and our most vulnerable all an authentic chance to remain here.

Our proposed zoning lays out ground rules for building a community for people, not cars, not sprawl. It is designed to enhance our quality of life, alleviate congestion, and promote healthy living. It reflects our values. This zoning achieves more than 100 of the nearly 600 goals set forth in SomerVision.

We can no longer afford to leave one of our best housing tools on the table. It is time to pass the zoning overhaul. Let’s get it done in 2019. Let’s commit that next year at this time, we’ll be celebrating that we passed it.

There’s no one magic solution to the housing crisis. Yet when you combine the Office of Housing Stability, the transfer fee, new zoning, an updated condo conversion ordinance, the brain trust and the housing land trust, we will be able to help some of the most vulnerable people in our community in ways no other city in Massachusetts can match.
Sometimes the wheels of bureaucracy grind along at an agonizingly unhurried pace, leaving much needed change far behind in its timeliness and degree of import. In one such case, the matter of renaming one of our city’s primary governing bodies in a manner more fittingly befitting its timeliness and degree of import. It is hardly necessary to point out how anticipated and inappropriate the current appellation has been, considering the fact that women have been members of the Board for decades. And let us not overlook the fact that “alder” (i.e., “elder”) individuals are also no longer exclusively entitled to membership in that august body, with a wide range of ages having been represented for many years, right up to the present time.

Our View Of The Times

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A day at the Somerville Winter Farmers Market

The weekly market, held at the Center for Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Ave., Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., from December to mid-April, offers the best locally grown and regionally produced agricultural items including vegetable produce, cheese, eggs, meats, fish, breads, pastries, chocolate, and wine. They feature rotating guest vendors each week, as well as live entertainment.

The Somerville Winter Farmers Market is managed by Groundwork Somerville in partnership with Arts at the Armory.

Go to https://www.somwintermarket.org for more information.
Somerville seeking Somervision 2040 committee members

In addition, city staff have prepared “The Path Since 2010,” which summarizes the progress on Somervision goals we’ve achieved together since 2010 including the Green Line Extension beginning construction, adding 7,000 new jobs in Somerville, with the addition of 378 permanently affordable housing units, and 15 new acres of open space.


There will be plenty of opportunities to participate in the Somervision 2040 process beyond joining the SVC, including the official kickoff on Tuesday, January 15, at 6 p.m. at The Armory, 191 Highland Ave. All are also encouraged to attend this event to learn more about Somervision 2030 and the process for creating Somervision 2040, or to review the video recording, which will be posted at www.Somervision2040.com. An RSVP is not required, but an RSVP at EventBrite is encouraged.

To view “The Path Since 2010” and apply to the SVC visit www.Somervision2040.com. The best way to stay informed about additional Somervision 2040 activities is to sign up for the newsletter on the website.

Individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, in order to access the programs and activities of the City of Somerville or to attend meetings, should contact the City’s ADA Coordinator, Nancy Salamoun, at 617-625-6600 x2323 or NSalamoun@somervillema.gov.

— City of Somerville

Medford and Somerville H.S. basketball 2019 Tufts Classic

The Medford High School Mustangs and Somerville High School Highlanders girls and boys basketball teams will continue their rivalry at the 3rd Annual Tufts Classic on Sunday, January 20, at the Cousens Gymnasium on Tufts’ Medford/Somerville campus. The girls’ game will tip off at 12:30 p.m., and the boys’ game will tip off at 2:00 p.m.

This is the only time Medford and Somerville will meet all season.

For the first time, the winners of each game will receive a “Tufts Classic” trophy, which will stay in their possession until the next Tufts Classic.

Players from all four teams will receive specially-branded Tufts Classic t-shirts to commemorate their participation in the doubleheader.

Admission to the Tufts Classic doubleheader is free. Event staff will be accepting donations for food pantries in Medford and Somerville. Fans are asked to bring nonperishable food items to support those in need in both cities.

Welcoming the Co-Incidence Festival

CONT. FROM PG 1

A couple pre-scheduled concerts will be predetermined, the structure of the festival will be centered on daily conversations led by Sarah, and other impromptu events as they are determined collectively.

The ‘official’ concerts this year, all at Washington Street Art Center, are scheduled as follows: Welcome Concert: Friday, January 11, 8:00 – 10:00 p.m. Featuring pieces by Sarah Pittman, Jennie Gottschalk, Chris Strouth, and the NSL Collective. This one has 4 pieces happening concurrently in WSAC and outside around the Center. This will be a big event and, hopefully, a great kick-off to the Festival. (https://www.facebook.com/events/224934621976231/)

Guest Artist Showcase #1: Saturday, January 12, 8:00 – 10:00 p.m. Featuring 10-min pieces by 5 of the Co-Incidence Artists. A straight-up show that should be fun featuring John Eagle, Joachim Eckel, Jordan Dykstra, Clara Allison, and Tim Tsang. (https://www.facebook.com/events/210608321934797/)

Guest Artist Showcase #2: Sunday, January 13, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Same day, but the other 5 artists (of 10 total): Michael Pisa, Aaron Foster Brelynn, Derek Baron, Angela Rojas, and Luke Martin. (https://www.facebook.com/events/322452985995690/)

Final Concert: Saturday, January 19, 8:00 – 10:00 p.m. This one is in progress of “coming together.” It will feature documentation from throughout the week and a collaborative piece cooked up by all of the artists throughout the week. (https://www.facebook.com/events/386601742994981/)

For more information about the festival visit the website at http://www.coincidencefestival.com.
To advertise in our Business Directory, call or fax.
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JANUARY 9, 2019
CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSHDUB CURTATONE
MAYOR

GEORGE J. PROBAKS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PLANNING DIVISION

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A joint public hearing for all interested parties will be held by the Planning Board and the Somerville City Council’s Land Use Committee on Tuesday, January 29, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA. The purpose of this hearing will be to receive public comments concerning the following:

A proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance regarding the Mandatory Open Space in the AMZD and NVZ Districts.

Submissions may be viewed in person in the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, located on the third floor of City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA, Mon-Wed, 8:30 am-4:30 pm; Thurs, 8:30 am-7:00 pm; and Fri, 8:30 am-12:30 pm.

As items may be continued to later dates, please check the agenda on the City’s website or call before attending. Continued items will not be re-advertised. Interested persons may provide comments to the Planning Board and the Land Use Committee at the hearing or by submitting written comments by mail to OSPA, Planning Division, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143, by fax to 617-625-022; or by email to planning@somervillema.gov.

Attn: Michael A. Caproni, Chair, Somerville Planning Board
Attn: Councilor Katja Bahney, President, City Council
To be published in the Somerville Times on 01/09/2019 and 01/16/2019

1/16/19 The Somerville Times

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSHDUB CURTATONE
MAYOR

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing for all interested parties will be held by the Zoning Board of Appeals on Wednesday, January 23, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Chambers, City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA.

Cases are sometimes postponed to later dates. To sign up for an agenda item or in case of a change of hearing date, please contact Thupten Chukhatsang at tchukhatsang@somervillema.gov.

1/29/19 The Somerville Times

LEGAL NOTICES can also be viewed on our website at www.thesomervilletimes.com
Urban Gardening: A Talk with Lindsay Allen

The Somerville Public Library, 79 Highland Ave., welcomes Lindsay Allen, the Rooftop Farmer at Boston Medical Center and Operations Director at Higher Ground Farm, for a discussion of urban gardening on Thursday, January 24, at 6:00 p.m. Attendees will learn about the history of urban gardening, food justice, and innovative ways to grow food at their homes.

This is the first event in the Food for Thought: Community Gardening and Cooking Initiative. The initiative will continue with the installation of a teaching garden at the Central Library in the spring of 2019.

Additional events will include hands-on educational workshops, as well as the addition of several gardening kits to the library’s circulating collection. Participants of all ages will acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to create and maintain gardens in an urban environment and learn techniques for cooking and preserving fresh produce. All programs are free and open to the public.

Food for Thought is funded in large part by a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant.

Please contact Lilly Sundell-Thomas at (617) 623-5000 x2961 or laudell-thomas@minlib.net for more information.

Beacon Hill Roll Call

Massachusetts Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel. “Nearly nine out of ten cigarette smokers started before they were 18 years old, and 98 percent first tried smoking by age 26.”

Bharel continued. “Because the brain is not fully developed until the mid-20s, youth and young adults are uniquely at risk for long-term, long-lasting effects of exposure to nicotine. By delaying the age when young people may first begin using tobacco, we can reduce the risk that they will become lifelong tobacco users.”

“As I have consistently said, if society entrants a 18-year-old with something as important as the right to vote for their elected officials, or the ability to fight for their country in war, they should be allowed the responsi- bility to choose whether or not they want to use toba-acco,” said Sen. Don Humason (R-Westfield). “I become concerned when the Legislature tries to tell people who would otherwise be considered adults what they can and cannot do.”

SALARY HIKE FOR CABINET MEMBERS AND OTHERS - The nine cabinet secretaries under the gov- ernor have received a 5.5 percent pay hike. The increase of $8,883 will raise their pay from $161,522 to 170,405. Executive agency heads and commissioners and employ- ees of the governor’s office will also receive the 5.5 per- cent hike.

This hike comes only days after a total of $1.2 million in salary hikes per year was given last week to the governor, the other five constitutional statewide officers, 40 sena- tors and 160 representatives. These hikes ranged from a 5.83 percent pay raise for the governor and other constitutional officers got theirs. Critics say that this hike is a fair and reasonable increase that executive branch managers have received over the past four years.

“Trickle-down economics’ Bay State style,” said Chip Ford, executive director of Citizens for Limited Taxa- tion. “Legislators grabbed a 5.83 percent pay raise and another illicit hike in their ‘expenses’ of 8 percent. Then the governor and other constitutional officers got theirs. Like water flowing downhill, cabinet secretaries and the well-connected schooling downstream catch the scraps from the feeding frenzy,” continued Ford. “Meanwhile, taxpayers got trickled on: A paltry .05 percent pay raise from the miniscule reduction of the long-past due roll- back of the 3-decades old ‘temporary’ income tax hike. On Beacon Hill this passes for ‘pay equity.’ Marie-Antoinette called it ‘Let them eat cake.’”

HONOR ROSA PARKS (S 2410) – The House and Senate approved and sent to Gov. Baker a bill requiring the MBTA, during the month of February, to have an LED display or decal on each bus to recognize the ac- complishments of Rosa Parks to the Civil Rights Move- ment. By refusing in 1955 to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus, Parks even- tually became known as “the first lady of civil rights” and “the mother of the freedom movement.”

Parks was arrested and convicted of disorderly conduct. What followed was a 381-day boycott of the bus system by blacks that was organized by the then 26-year old Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The incident led to a Su- preme Court ruling that desegregated public transpor- formation in Montgomery. This eventually led to the 1964 Civil Rights Act that desegregated all public accommo- dations nationwide.

“It was an honor and a privilege to both sponsor and advocate for this legislative bill which will honor an American heroine, said Sen James Timilty (D-Milton). “The sole purpose of this legislation is to commemorate the incredible courage and sacrifices exemplified by Ms. Rosa Parks. I am proud that this piece of legislation was enacted by both bodies of the Legislature.”


“This state is bursting with talent, humor and decency. Boldness and common sense. Our abiding sense of pa- triotism, belonging and community has made us strong and has carried us forward for almost 400 years. Let’s make our brand of politics positive and optimistic, instead of cruel and dark. And instead of the bickering and name calling that dominates much of today’s public debate, let’s build on the work of those who came before us.” — Republican Gov. Baker

“We’ve chosen partnership over partisanship and worked to find common ground ... We’ve focused on doing the work we were elected to do rather than get- ting bogged down in political gamesmanship ... We will resist the temptations to react to the headlines coming from Washington D.C. and won’t regress to partisan bickering.” — Republican Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito

“Amid the clamor and discontent of our national dis- course, we have a lot to be grateful for in Massachu- setts. Still, we have many challenges facing us. And the needs of our commonwealth are varied and com- plex. So now it’s time to get to work.” — Democrat House Speaker Bob DeLeo

“How long was last week’s session?” Beacon Hill Roll Call tracks the length of time that the House and Senate were in session each week. Many leg- islators say that legislative sessions are only one aspect of the Legislature’s job and that a lot of important work is done outside of the House and Senate chambers. They note that their jobs also involve committee work, re- search, constituent work and other matters that are im- portant to their districts, Critics say that the Legislature does not meet regularly or long enough to debate and vote in public view on the thousands of pieces of legisla- tion that have been filed. They note that the infrequency and brief length of sessions are misguided and lead to irresponsible late-night sessions and a mad rush to act on dozens of bills in the days immediately preceding the end of an annual session.

During the week of December 31-January 4, the House met for a total of 19 hours and one minute while the Senate met for a total of 26 hours and 17 minutes.

Mon. December 31 House 11:02 a.m. to 9:50 p.m.
Senate 11:20 a.m. to 10:17 p.m.

Tues. January 1 House 11:04 a.m. to 1:06 p.m.
Senate 11:14 a.m. to 11:12 p.m.

Wed. January 2 House 11:08 a.m. to 2:25 p.m.
Senate 11:09 a.m. to 2:07 p.m.

Thurs. January 3 House 11:00 a.m. to 1:54 p.m.
Senate 11:27 a.m. to 11:51 a.m.

Fri. January 4 No House session
No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Wednesday|January 9

East Branch Library
Preschool Storytime
11 a.m.-11:45 a.m. | 115 Broadway

Central Library
Somerville High School Anime Club
2:45 p.m.-4:30 p.m. | 79 Highland Ave

Thursday|January 10

Central Library
Preschool Storytime for 3-5-year-olds
10:30 a.m.-11:15 a.m. | TELL (Teen Library Leaders) Meeting
3:45 p.m.-5:45 p.m. | 79 Highland Ave

Friday|January 11

Central Library
Sing Along with Fred & Friends!
10:30 a.m.-11:15 a.m. | 79 Highland Ave

Monday|January 14

Central Library
Girls Who Code
6:15 p.m.-7:45 p.m. | 79 Highland Ave

Wednesday|January 16

East Branch Library
Preschool Storytime
11 a.m.-11:45 a.m. | 115 Broadway

Central Library
Somerville Positive Forces
1 p.m.-3 p.m. | 79 Highland Ave

MUSIC/ARTS

Wednesday|January 9

Sally O’Brien’s Bar
Free Poker, lots of prizes!
8 p.m.-3:35 Somerville Ave | 617-666-3589

The Burren
Backroom series with Brian O’Donovan (“A Celtic Sojourn” on WGCH) 7:30 p.m.

Monday|January 14

Bull McCabe’s Pub
Pop Up Play Group!
10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | 115 Broadway

Tuesday|January 15

Central Library
Girls Who Code
6:15 p.m.-7:45 p.m. | 79 Highland Ave

Wednesday|January 16

East Branch Library
Preschool Storytime
11 a.m.-11:45 a.m. | 115 Broadway

Central Library
Somerville Positive Forces
1 p.m.-3 p.m. | 79 Highland Ave

Thursday|January 10

Sally O’Brien’s Bar
Ways & Means Committee, Rust
ed Bucket Band
7:30 p.m | 335 Somerville Ave | 617-440-5905

The Burren
Jeff Kemmerly | 7 p.m.
Scatting Cat
247 Elm St | 617-776-6896

Orleans Restaurant and Bar
65 Holland St | 617-776-5910-2100

Bull McCabe’s
Kruthy Factory (Dub Down)
10 p.m. | 366A Somerville Ave | 617-440-6045

Thunder Road
Crooked Coast with special guests The Quinns, Over The Bridge, and Alright, Thanks
7 p.m. | 79 Somerville Ave

On Your Own

Saturday|January 12

Bull McCabe’s
Santospago
Greg Klyma Band featuring Andy Bianchi
247 Elm St | 617-776-6896

On Your Own

Sunday|January 13

Bull McCabe’s
Syndicated
Paul Carpino Band
247 Elm St | 617-776-6896

On Your Own

Sunday|January 13

Bull McCabe’s
Dub Apocalypse
366A Somerville Ave | 617-440-6045

Hilltop Kitchen
Sunday Brunch Live Country & Bluegrass
150 Highland Ave | 617-625-6113

Aeronaut Brewing Co.
Indie Trio
8 p.m. | 14 Tyler Street

On Your Own

Tuesday|January 15

Aeronaut Brewing Co.
Bull McCabe’s
Dub Apocalypse
366A Somerville Ave | 617-440-6045

Hilltop Kitchen
First Tuesday of the Month Spell Night
hosted by Victor and Nicole of Egoart.
The fun starts at 10:00 p.m.
150 Highland Ave | 617-625-6113

Py's Ryan
Quiz Pub
10 p.m. | 239 Holland St | 617-625-8200

Thunder Road
Singer Songwriter with special guests Xander Nelson, Visiting Wine, and Strawberry Machine
7 p.m. | 379 Somerville Ave

On Your Own

Wednesday|January 16

Sally O’Brien’s Bar
The Natural Wonders (4 p.m)
Afro Latin Night, SambaLolo hosts
10 p.m. | 355 Somerville Ave | 617-440-3589

On Your Own

Wednesday|January 16

Sally O’Brien’s Bar
Brunch Beatles Brunch 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.
Bull McCabe’s Pub
Dub Apocalypse
366A Somerville Ave | 617-440-6045

Hilltop Kitchen
Sunday Brunch Live Country & Bluegrass
150 Highland Ave | 617-625-6113

Aeronaut Brewing Co.
Indie Trio
8 p.m. | 14 Tyler Street

On Your Own

On Your Own

Saturday|January 12

Central Library
Gallery @ SPL Reception: Dylan Kaufman, The Boston and Maine
11 a.m.-1 p.m. | 79 Highland Ave

On Your Own

Winters Farmers Market
9 a.m.-1 p.m. | Arts at the Armory | 191 Highland Ave

Bagel Bards
Somerville Writers and Poets meet weekly to discuss their work
9 a.m.-12 p.m Au Bon Pain | 18-48 Holland St

Sunday|January 13

Central Library
Picture Book Author/Illustrators Critique Group
2 p.m.-4 p.m. | 335 Somerville Ave | 617-358-3589

On Your Own

Fourth Step to Freedom Al-Anon Family Groups
7:00 p.m. | 6 William Street

On Your Own

Monday|January 14

Central Library
Somerville Stands Together
4 p.m.-6 p.m. | Somerville Commission for Women
6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. | Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club
7 p.m.-8 p.m. | 79 Highland Ave

On Your Own

On Your Own

Tuesday|January 15

Central Library
Learn English at the Library!
6 p.m.-8 p.m. | 115 Broadway

On Your Own

Wednesday|January 16

Central Library
Drop-in Knitting/Needlecraft
12 p.m.-2 p.m. | 79 Highland Ave

PLACES TO GO, THINGS TO DO!
If you are interested in joining, have any questions or require additional information please call Natasha at 617-625-6600 Ext. 2317.

Low Vision Support Group – Meets the second Thursday of every month from 1:00 to 2:00 P.M. at the Cross Street Center. Our Social Worker, Ashley Speliotis, facilitates this group. If you know someone who has trouble seeing? Do you have low vision? Join our Low Vision Support Group for educational and informational resources. This group meets in a confidential environment. Lunch and transportation may be available. If you are interested in joining, have any questions or require additional information please call Ashley at 617-625-6600 Ext. 2318.

Memory Café – Meets the second Thursday of every month from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Mt. Vernon Place. Our Social Worker, Ashley Speliotis, facilitates this group. A welcoming place for people with Alzheimer’s and their family and friends to share a meal and create new memories. If you are interested in joining, have any questions or require additional information please call Ashley at 617-625-6600 Ext. 2318.

Mens Group – Meets the first Tuesday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. This group is facilitated by our volunteer, Norbert DeMato. Are you recently retired? Looking to connect with other men in the community? Join our mens group where you can connect with old friends and make new ones. All men 55 and over are welcome. If you are interested in joining, have any questions or require additional information please call Maureen at 617-625-6600 Ext. 2335.

Current Events Group – Meets the third Thursday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Maureen Bastardi, our Social Worker, facilitates this group. Our Social Worker, Ashley Speliotis, facilitates this group. Must call a week in advance if you plan on attending. This is essential to ensure we have enough material for everyone. If you are interested in joining, have any questions or require additional information please call Maureen at 617-625-6600 Ext. 2335.

Coffee & Conversation – Meets every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Maureen Bastardi, Program Coordinator facilitates this group. If you have low vision? Join our Low Vision Support Group for educational and informational resources. This group meets in a confidential environment. Lunch and transportation may be available. If you are interested in joining, have any questions or require additional information please call Ashley at 617-625-6600 Ext. 2318.

CROSS STREET CENTER GROUP INFORMATION

The Somerville Times
Let’s Talk About Race is a podcast and radio show hosted by Diane Wong which invites people from all backgrounds to engage in courageous conversations around issues related to race. Join host Diane Wong and Somerville Media Center by welcoming back a panel of the past years’ guests who will share their experiences and expertise on Saturday, January 19, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Somerville Media Center, 90 Union Square. Afterwards, join in for a community meal and participate in racial dialogues facilitated by the panelists.

Motivation behind the event...
Wong shares that, “Our country has a long history of race oppression. Because of this largely unprocessed history, fear of discussing race permeates our national culture. Somerville is no different. We must engage with race in order to break the cycles of oppression that penetrate our lives.” In celebration of Martin Luther King Day, come learn from a panel of educators, activists, young people, and community members who have engaged in these critical conversations over the past year as part of Wong’s ongoing episodes to her Let’s Talk About Race show.

The panel discussion participants include:
- Tina Cabral: Somerville, MA, Somerville Media Center
- Nina Walcott-Wentzel: Cambridge MA, Medical Secretary, Harvard Vanguard Associates.
- Raeshelle Cooke: Boston, MA, Filmmaker & Founder of RMC Pictures.
- Heather McCormack: Somerville, MA, SMC Youth Media Director.

For more information, please contact Heather McCormack at hmack@somervillemedia.org.

The Somerville Public Library and Somerville Media Center are excited to announce our 2019 workshops as part of our collaborative training program for improving people’s digital and technology skills called, Lunch & Learn Digital Literacy Series.

The next Lunch & Learn workshop is Tuesday, January 15 from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. at Somerville Media Center, 90 Union Square.

During this two-hour workshop on Understanding Google Suites & Apps, instructors will go over using google drive, its most popular apps (google docs, google sheets, google slides) and answer any questions from the students.

REGISTRATION: Please submit the form online at https://www.somervillemedia.org/lunchandlearn/ to sign up for any of our upcoming workshops! If not comfortable submitting the form, no worries, just call us at 617-628-8826 or send us an email at ejones@somervillemedia.org.

OTHER UPCOMING DIGITAL LITERACY WORKSHOPS: Somerville Media Center is expanding their digital literacy workshops to the community beyond the Lunch & Learn Series with the Somerville Public Library. SMC is happy to be a recipient of the SkillUp Somerville, a grant funded program of the City of Somerville.

With these funds, SMC is offering even more digital literacy workshops geared toward audiences who want to improve their ability to navigate and participate in the digital media sphere and greater social economy. This SMC Digital Literacy program will address a wider spectrum of digital inclusion factors like taking full advantage of utilizing smartphones, researching the internet, learning media production, graphic design, building user friendly websites, becoming a community journalist, deepening media literacy knowledge and in general creating media savvy consumers.

Read more about these offerings at https://www.somervillemedia.org/2019digitalliteracy/.

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Anne Elizabeth Pluto is Professor of Literature and Theatre at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA where she is the artistic director and one of the founders of the Oxford Street Players, the university’s Shakespeare troupe. She is an alumnus of Shakespeare & Company, and has been a member of the Worcester Shakespeare Company since 2011.

She was a member of the Boston small press scene in the late 1980s and is one of the founders and editors at Nixes Mate Review. Her chapbook, The Frog Princess, was published by White Pine Press (1985), her ebook Lubbock Electric, by Argotist ebooks (2012), and her chapbook Benign Protection by Cervara Barva Press (2016).


I had the pleasure to speak with Pluto on my Somerville Media Center TV show Poet to Poet/ Writer to Writer.

Doug Holder: In your collection Benign Protection you seem to be a master of absence. The absence of your late parents as defined by their “things.”

Anne Pluto: This is sort of my homage to grief, with the death of my father and mother. I had all these things that came from their rent-controlled Brooklyn apartment. I was writing poetry about my father, and when my mother was dying I wrote poetry about her too. The “things” from the apartment represented them. When I would go back to Brooklyn — I always stayed with friends who were close by to my parents’ apartment. So I would walk to their street, but I would never go down it. I didn’t want to see the building. Too painful. So I evoked my grief and my parents’ stories in my work.

DH: Tell me about your parents.

AP: Well my father had a fascinating life and it was referenced in one of the poems in the collection. My parents were Russian but they lived in Poland. My father was separated from my mother because he was in the Polish Army during World War II. He wound up as a prisoner in a Soviet prison. He also saw action in Egypt and Italy. Eventually he moved to Canada. And my mother was there. She had thought he was dead. Eventually they married in Toronto. After a waiting a year they came to America.

DH: I know that you are the director of the Oxford St. Players, that is connected to Lesley University. How does your role as a poet mix with that of the theater.

AP: They dovetail. Theater is very group oriented. It was referenced in one of the poems in the collection. My parents were Russian but they lived in Poland. My father was separated from my mother because he was in the Polish Army during World War II. He wound up as a prisoner in a Soviet prison. He also saw action in Egypt and Italy. Eventually he moved to Canada. And my mother was there. She had thought he was dead. Eventually they married in Toronto. After a waiting a year they came to America.

DH: I know that you are the director of the Oxford St. Players, that is connected to Lesley University. How does your role as a poet mix with that of the theater.

AP: They dovetail. Theater is very group oriented — you work with people. It is very interconnected. Obviously as a professor and director I am in charge of many things. With poetry you pull back. You are with yourself. I need that time too.

DH: You studied at the University at Buffalo in the 70s. I was up there at that time too. I also know Mike Baskinski, the former curator of the small press collection there. What was the lit scene like then?

AP: There were a lot of zines. It was a very do-it-yourself scene. It lived right around the block from it. Allston had a lot of theater as a little girl in Brooklyn. There were a lot of theaters in Allston, MA., a section of Boston. Eventually I became the Poetry Editor. Around this time Michael McNisin (a founder of the Nixes Mate Press) opened a bookstore in Allston. I lived right around the block from it. Allston had a lot of zines. It was a very do-it-yourself scene. Eventually I was married to the Punk Rock scene — that was very Allston-centric. Years later, Mike, Philip and I started Nixes Mate and the rest is history.

DH: You were also part of the small press scene in Allston, MA., a section of Boston.

AP: Yes. I had sent my work to a magazine called, Oak Square. Eventually I met the editor Philip Birenstein, I became involved with the lit mag. Eventually I became the Poetry Editor. Around this time Michael McNisin (a founder of the Nixes Mate Press) opened a bookstore in Allston. I lived right around the block from it. Allston had a lot of zines. It was a very do-it-yourself scene. Eventually I was married to the Punk Rock scene — that was very Allston-centric. Years later, Mike, Philip and I started Nixes Mate and the rest is history.

DH: You were also involved in the small press scene in Allston, MA., a section of Boston.

AP: Yes. I was always involved with theater. I did a lot of theater as a little girl in Brooklyn. There was a NYC Board of Education radio show at the time. I was in high school then. I would participate in these staged readings they would have. Working with Tina Packer was great, very challenging. I always wanted to be an actor but my parents wanted me to do something more practical.

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Lubbock Electric

Indiscriminate and irretrievable the past splinter before us like broken glass there are times when I am afraid to move as if I will break and break again your hands bind me against all that we have lost alone — together — and found by chance by luck in the name of god at a time when all roads led to the middle west — we we each other without searching I treasure even the minute the clocks that do not work unwound — left...
The winners of The Somerville Times Reader’s Choice results for THE BEST OF SOMERVILLE 2018

Congratulations to the winners! Please support their businesses and let them know you saw them in The Somerville Times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Idea in 2018:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bow Market</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worst Idea in 2018:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Announcing the closure of the Ball Sq. Bridge for a year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Best Somerville Food & Restaurants:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Breakfast</td>
<td>Kelly's Diner, 674 Broadway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Combination Breakfast &amp; Lunch</td>
<td>Ball Sq. Cafe, 708 Broadway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Italian Food</td>
<td>Mortadella Head, 20 College Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Italian Specialty Store</td>
<td>Pepe Bocca, 414 Highland Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Portuguese Restaurant</td>
<td>Neighborhood Restaurant, 25 Bow St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Brazilian Restaurant</td>
<td>Oliveira's Steak House, 120 Washington St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Chinese Food</td>
<td>China Delight, 524 Somerville Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Mexican Food</td>
<td>Tu y Yo Mexican Restaurant, 858 Broadway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Variety and All Around Restaurant</td>
<td>Mount Vernon Restaurant, 14 Broadway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Seafood Restaurant</td>
<td>Pescatore, 158 Boston Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Local Deli</td>
<td>Victor’s Deli, 710 Broadway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Irish Pub</td>
<td>Sally O’Brien’s, 335 Somerville Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Hamburger</td>
<td>Boston Burger Company, 37 Davis Sq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Roast Beef Sandwich</td>
<td>Mount Vernon Restaurant, 14 Broadway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Pizza</td>
<td>Midici, 463 Assembly Row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Chocolate</td>
<td>Taza Chocolate, 561 Windsor St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Donuts</td>
<td>Union Square Donuts, 20 Bow St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donuts Outside of Somerville</td>
<td>Demet’s Donuts, 199 Mystic Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Bakery</td>
<td>Modelos Market Café, 501 Medford St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Pies</td>
<td>Petti Pies, 285 Beacon St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Cheesecake</td>
<td>7ATE9 Bakery, 199C Highland Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Local Coffee Shop</td>
<td>Bloc Somerville, 11 Bow St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Bar for Bands</td>
<td>Thunder Road, 379 Somerville Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Bar/Entertainment</td>
<td>Lucky Strike, 325 Revolution Dr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Brew</td>
<td>AERONAUT, 14 Tyler St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Bar/Creative Drinks</td>
<td>The Painted Burro, 219 Elm St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best local Bar</td>
<td>Olde Magoun’s Saloon, 518 Medford St.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Best Somerville Services:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Doctor</td>
<td>Dr. Luis Henkel, Primary Care, MGH, 440 Foley St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Medical Services</td>
<td>Mass General Primary Care Assembly Row, 440 Foley St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Dentist</td>
<td>Dental Arts, Davis Sq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Electrician</td>
<td>David Falcone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Plumber</td>
<td>Mario, T.J. Sillari, Inc., 99 Albion St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Law Firm</td>
<td>Law Office of Sean O’Donovan, 741 Broadway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Attorney</td>
<td>Attorney Phil Privitera, 59 Union Sq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Insurance Agency</td>
<td>Wedgewood-Crane &amp; Connolly, 19 College Ave.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Best of Somerville Municipal Services:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Somerville Department</td>
<td>Water Dept., 17 Franey Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Somerville Official</td>
<td>Alderman Bill White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Somerville DPW</td>
<td>Supervisor: Rick Willette, Director of Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best City Employee DPW</td>
<td>Tom Barry, DPW-Highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best City Employee City Hall/Annex</td>
<td>John Long, City Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best City Elected Politician</td>
<td>Katjana Ballantyne, Alderman, Ward 7 and Board President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Teacher</td>
<td>Victoria Macrokanis, West Somerville Neighborhood School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Nurse</td>
<td>Ann Moran, former Central Hospital nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Police Officer</td>
<td>Lieutenant James Polito, Somerville Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Firefighter</td>
<td>Mike Avery, Somerville Fire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Best of Somerville Arts/Entertainment:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Somerville Poet</td>
<td>Doug Holder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Photographer</td>
<td>Claudia Ferro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Commentary Writer</td>
<td>William C. Shelton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Somerville Historian</td>
<td>Bob “Monty” Doherty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Somerville Non-Profit Agency</td>
<td>Little Sisters of the Poor, 186 Highland Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Somerville Charity</td>
<td>Somerville Homeless Coalition, 1 Davis Square</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Best Creative idea in 2018:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Norton Group Real Estate joining Century 21 North East</td>
<td>Winter Hill Bank, winterhillbank.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Somerville Charity</td>
<td>Somerville Homeless Coalition, 1 Davis Square</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>