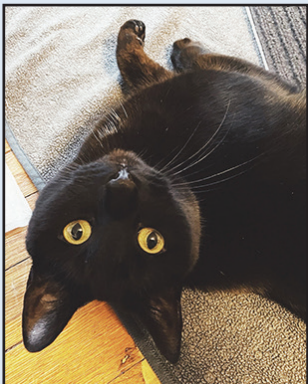




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Anti-Displacement Task Force reports finalized



The city released three Anti-Displacement Task Force reports late last month.

By Jeffrey Shwom

Almost 20 months after beginning its effort, the City of Somerville released three Anti-Displacement Task Force (ADTF) Reports on January 30, with hopes of informing and guiding city and state level policies concerning displacement. Three committees were formed "to develop recommendations aimed at reducing the rate of displacement," per the city.

Residential

The Residential task force [1] listed 10 recommendations, the first of which is to "build on the efforts...in drafting a rent stabilization home rule petition filed with the State Legislature and continue to advocate." Termed "critical components" of the Home Rule Petition include an annual cap on rent increases (with exemptions for

Continued on page 4

June Bug restaurant wins award

By Cathleen Twardzik

Somerville restaurant June Bug is one winner of an eating spot.

In fact, they were just crowned "The Best of Somerville: Winner of Best Pizza."

Therefore, be sure to try their awesome "naturally-leavened pizza."

Interestingly, "June Bug is a new concept from the team at [the restaurant] Field & Vine. The food follows the same philosophy, and [it] is sourced locally and in-season. The cuisine is casual – with emphasis on the beautiful Maine-built wood fire oven. We cook naturally-leavened pizzas, fun salads, wood fire-roasted veggies and more," according to their website.

Besides reserving a table at this small eatery, which is located at 251 Washington St., large party and event booking is available, as

Continued on page 9



Sink your teeth into award-winning pizza at June Bug.

— Photo by Bobbie Toner



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NEWTALK

The views and opinions expressed in Newstalk do not necessarily reflect those of The Somerville Times, its publisher or staff. The column has many contributors.

Join a public **Community Meeting** regarding **231-249 Elm Street and 6-8 & 12 Grove Street** (the development project from the Burren to Dragon Pizza). Wednesday, February 12, at 6 p.m. **Somerville Community Baptist Church**, 31 College Ave. The property owner and developer will be engaging in a discussion regarding the project. This is the 5th conversation and meeting notes from the previous four meetings can be found here: <https://allev-ents.in/somerville/community-meeting-re-231-249-elm-street-and-6-8-and-12-grove-street/200027806790629>.








The **Boston Science Fiction Film Festival** celebrates 50 years. The fest returns to **Somerville's Davis Square**, 55 Davis Square, **February 12–16**, with local premieres, visiting filmmakers, and 24 hours of genre favorites. Visit <https://www.bostonscifi.com/2025festival>.

Happy birthday this week to the following: Happy birthday to **Donna Alibrandi**, who is celebrating this week. We hope she has a great day. Also celebrating this week is **Denise Racicot-Kallis**. We wish her the very best of birthdays. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **JoAnn Bocca-Rivieccio**, **Rhiannon Riley**, **Anne Belcher**, **Diane Hill Melanson**, **Valerie Fitzpatrick**, **Phil Rudolph**, **Albert Piacentini**, **Dave Ortega**, **Joelle Hochman**, **Jeannie Malone DeMase** and **Dee Manuel-Raposo** a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all

Continued on page 7

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of February 12 – February 18 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 Wednesday <i>February 12</i>	Cloudy	30°/26°	10%	6%	NNE 10 mph
 Thursday <i>February 13</i>	Rain	38°/23°	84%	72%	NW 13 mph
 Friday <i>February 14</i>	Sunny	30°/14°	2%	1%	NW 15 mph
 Saturday <i>February 15</i>	Snow	32°/30°	70%	61%	SW 7 mph
 Sunday <i>February 16</i>	Rain	38°/14°	71%	61%	NW 13 mph
 Monday <i>February 17</i>	Partly Cloudy	23°/7°	10%	6%	WNW 19 mph
 Tuesday <i>February 18</i>	Sunny	24°/13°	3%	1%	W 13 mph

NOTE: Conditions subject to change. Always check a daily forecast prior to activities that can be affected by the weather.

The Somerville Times

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Comments of the Week

Response to: Davis Square residents contemplate proposed 25-level high-rise on Elm Street

Liz says:

To be fair, the only inaccuracy to the NIMBY flyer is how ugly it made the building. Not a single rendering produced by Copper Mill has captured the full height of the structure. I think only being zoned up to 4 stories is unreasonable, but I would prefer that the entire square be reworked in 6-10 story buildings with a variety of owners and features than have one centralized monolith.

Response to: Advocates cry foul over first SPS Building Project survey

Bill Gilman says:

1. Got the wrong school in the cover picture. It's the winter hill school that is currently vacated, seeing a massive drop in enrollment and significant stressor for the teachers and admins. The school is great, by the way, and still a good choice for your kid.
2. The city already knows what the opinions and desires of the winter hill and brown school communities are. Do you want a neighborhood school? Yes. What if it costs more? That's ok. It's budget override time, y'all.

But, with this mayor/administration, it's always survey time, not action time. "I've got a survey for that" should be their motto for the next election.

Casimir H. Prohosky Jr. says:

Since we're momentarily fixated on the choice of photo for this article, I'll just jump in here and point out that the text of the resolution in part states: "...regarding the replacement of the Winter Hill and, potentially, Brown School."

You're welcome.

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

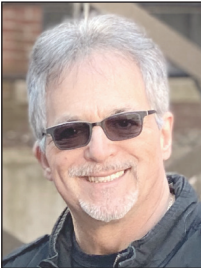
Life in the

VILLE

by Jimmy Del Ponte

The views and opinions expressed in the commentaries and letters to the Editor of The Somerville Times do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of The Somerville Times, its publishers or staff.

Parking Woes



I'm lucky I'm in walking distance of Davis Square if I need something down there. But what are drivers to do if they need to shop there?

There are two municipal lots that are filled up quickly. There are still a handful of meters scattered around the square. My go to spots are across from Redbones on Chester St.

if you survived the recent storm, you may have had trouble finding a parking spot. There was parking in school lots during the posted emergency times. It's certainly a challenge to grab these few spaces. As the city keeps trying to help the pedestrians and bicycles the drivers find themselves in a battle for parking.

It would be great if the city added public parking instead of taking more away. You

can't even stop in front of a corner store to run in for a lottery ticket. Pretty soon we will all be on bikes or on foot.

Especially during a snow emergency, it's first come first serve. There's a battle for the few spots around the city. Then you have a time limit in when you have to move your car.

Here are your thoughts:

"Fkg ridiculous! We had an open space in front of our house and the person who came to take that parking space told us he lives on Winter Hill and drove up and down the streets until he found the open space here, Powderhouse area! All the spaces taken away number in the hundreds! Some of us cannot ride bikes!"

"Growing up in Somerville parking was relatively easy, we lived right around the corner from Post 19 and dad was a member. He parked in their parking lot."

"Goodness gracious, is winter '25 gonna be the big debate of parking in a Somer-



ville driveway? My parents' driveway is 9 feet across. Good luck in parking these big SUVs in it. Not to mention siblings who crashed into the house because they don't know how to back up."

Don't put out any good furniture to save a parking space. Those days are over.

More cars, more construction and fewer parking spots is a growing problem. Hang in there.



A New Cooperative Espresso Bar

310 Highland Ave. (inside Razor's Barbershop)
Mon - Sat 7:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

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Join the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust

The City of Somerville is seeking a new member to join the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust (SAHT) in a volunteer role. This vacancy is for a representative of a Somerville nonprofit organization whose primary mission is affordable housing. If you're passionate about advancing affordable housing in our community, this is a great opportunity to make an impact.

What is the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust?

The SAHT is dedicated to creating and preserving affordable homes for renters and prospective owners with low and moderate incomes in Somerville. Through a public process, Trustees evaluate project and program proposals and approve funding allocations to help increase the supply of affordable housing in our city.

Who Can Join?

Eligible applicants for the current vacancy must be a professional in the field of banking or finance.

What is the Time Commitment?

The Trust meets virtually on the second Thursday of each month at 5:15 p.m., with meetings typically lasting around 1.5 hours. Additional time for review of documents and occasional special meetings may be needed, for an estimated total of 4 hours per month.

What is the Appointment Process?

Members are appointed to two-year terms in a volunteer capacity. The SAHT is composed of nine Trustees, with six members appointed by the Mayor after a review by the Appointments Advisory Committee. Three members serve in an ex-officio capacity.

How Do I Apply?

Applications are due by **March 7th, 2025**. Please submit a resume, cover letter, and any relevant supplemental materials.

Where to Apply:

Applications can be sent via email or U.S. Mail to:

- Email: pgoldstein@somervillema.gov
- Mail: Paul Goldstein, City of Somerville, OSPCD Housing Division, 50 Evergreen Ave., Somerville, MA 02145

For questions or more information, contact Paul Goldstein at pgoldstein@somervillema.gov or call 617-625-6600 ext. 2587.

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Persons with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication (i.e., CART, ASL), written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures in order to access the programs, activities, and meetings of the City of Somerville should please contact Adrienne Pomeroy in advance at 617-625-6600 x 2059 or apomeroy@somervillema.gov.

Visit us online at www.TheSomervilleTimes.com

Somerville Police Dept Crime Log January 28 – February 3

Residential Breaking and Entering

25005121: On 1/28/25 at approximately 4:08 p.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Myrtle St. for a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated his brother had recently passed away and there were several belongings missing from his home.

Assault

25005098: On 1/28/25 at approximately 2:05 p.m., Somerville Police responded to 779 McGrath Hwy. for report of an injured person. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he got into a fight with another male party. The victim suffered an injury to his eye.

Arrest

25006259: On 2/3/25 at approximately 1:05 p.m., Somerville Police responded to Foley St. for report of an assault. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he got into an argument with a male party inside the train station. During the argument, the male suspect displayed a knife and pointed it at the victim. Officers then located the male suspect and he was placed under arrest.

Other Crimes: 2 Bike thefts • 2 Car Breaks • 1 MV theft • 2 Package thefts • 1 Vandalism • 3 MV vandalisms

— Somerville Police Department



Crime Tip Hotline: 617-776-7210

Do your part - Leave a message on our tip hotline answering machine – All calls are confidential – Your Privacy is Assured. If you choose, you can leave your name and phone number and your call will be returned (not required). Also, if you prefer you may e-mail directly with your crime tip. We will follow up on all information provided to the best of our ability.

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Powered by:



Anti-Displacement Task Force reports finalized

CONT. FROM PG 1

rent-restricted housing and owner-occupied units), stabilized rents between turnover of tenants, and a giving developers of new construction 15 years to gain certificate of occupancy.

Other residential recommendations include encouraging building sales to affordable housing developers, a local ordinance that requires landlords to notify tenants when selling, and keep existing levels of funding for legal services for tenants facing eviction. Morena Zelaya, co-chair of the Residential Displacement Committee, exclaimed, "As this report outlines, the city is doing so many great things to try and meet those challenges but there is always more work to do!"

Creative

The Creative Displacement Committee [2] reminded us through their efforts that "Creatives nationwide are under attack" where they live and work, in how they share their work and make money, how much they earn and pay for necessities.

Musician Jenn Harrington [3] said, the report "is a genuine reflection of our collective efforts. It's informative, well-orga-

nized, passionate, and deeply human. In many ways, it's a work of art – as much as a report can be. We wanted to capture the heart and the pain of our creatives and our community, ensuring they know they've been heard and that we are truly honored to have them here."

The six policy initiatives focus on more integration of arts and creativity into the city ecosystem, an effort to cultivate and preserve creative space, using zoning and city ordinances to support Arts and Culture, enhancing business development, and establishing funding sources. Ideas include expanding grants through the Somerville Arts Council, a proposed property tax surcharge, and adoption of a "Statement of Values for the Arts" to remind folks and the city of the importance of keeping arts and the creative economy top of mind.

Small Business

For the Small Enterprise Displacement Committee [4], it divided its nine actions into the short, middle and long term. Ted Fields, Senior Economic Development Planner, the committee focused on three goals: "How can the city stop businesses

from having to move or close? What can the city do right away to help? What parts of commercial displacement are beyond the city's control and need help from the State or Federal government?" For example, a final version of the Commercial Leasing Handbook, which aims to help local small business owners understand commercial property leasing, has already been prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for city and Committee review.

The Committee also called for a Commercial Tenant Bill of Rights, changing the Vacant Storefront ordinance, an expansion of the city's Site Finding Assistance Program, and suggested creation of an "entity to find and manage spaces or businesses to rent at lower prices." Jessica Eshleman, committee member and Executive Director of Union Square Main Streets, said "Somerville has a real opportunity to continue to be a national leader in anti-displacement efforts, especially for independently-owned, small businesses. Opportunities for zoning to encourage affordable commercial space in conjunction

with density bonuses ... is a strategy not yet happening in our country. This is one of the things that excites me most in the report. If anyone can do it, Somerville can."

In a press release from the Mayor's Office, "The ADTF was called into action in 2023 by Mayor Ballantyne in response to not only the housing crisis but also rental pressures on local businesses, nonprofits, and the cultural arts that can lead to displacement." The Spring 2025 date for a panel discussion with committee members and film viewing commissioned by the Task Force has yet to be set.

Links:

[1] <https://voice.somervillema.gov/20092/widgets/65640/documents/64246>

[2] <https://voice.somervillema.gov/20092/widgets/65640/documents/64238>

[3] <https://www.instagram.com/aboutonething>

[4] <https://voice.somervillema.gov/20092/widgets/65640/documents/64237>

Debate over school construction plans: City Council reviews Winter Hill replacement and community concerns

By Carlie Lombardi

On Thursday, February 6, The School Building Facilities and Maintenance Special Committee met virtually to discuss important issues surrounding the future of school infrastructure in the city. The meeting, which covered various topics, was focused on the process of replacing the Winter Hill Community Innovation School, the results of the community feedback survey, and the timeline for school construction.

Survey Sparks Debate Over School Plans

The School Building Community Feedback Survey, which was posted without first being reviewed by the Community Advisory Group (CAG), was the subject of a heated debate during the meeting. Several council members and community representatives expressed concerns that the survey was biased in favor of a single large school model rather than preserving neighborhood schools.

City officials defended the survey, stating that it was intended to collect broad com-

munity feedback. However, some argued that its design appeared to guide responses toward a predetermined outcome. There were calls for the survey to be withdrawn, its data discarded, and a revised version to be developed, but officials ultimately decided to keep the survey active, with the possibility of making revisions based on further review.

Community Decision Making Concerns

The meeting revealed some frustrations among CAG members and school communities. Many felt that their voices were not being heard and that the public engagement process lacked transparency. Both Winter Hill and Brown School representatives voiced opposition to any proposal that would make their schools into a larger institution, fearing it would disrupt the close-knit environments that they have with their current educational models.

Additionally, some council members highlighted that past miscommunications and a lack of overall decision making had reduced the trust in city led school projects. They urged city officials to take community concerns seriously to ensure a fair



and transparent process moving forward. Winter Hill School Replacement and Construction Timeline

The committee also reviewed the timeline for replacing the Winter Hill Community Innovation School, which was closed due to structural concerns. City officials provided an update on the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process, noting that the project

has advanced to the next phase, which includes forming a team and hiring an architect by mid 2025.

A major point of discussion was whether the new school should be built on the current Winter Hill site or moved to another location, such as Trum Field or the DPW site. Council members debated the logistical and financial challenges of each option and emphasized *Continued on page 11*



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Beacon Hill Roll Call



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Beacon Hill Roll Call can also be viewed on our website at www.thesomervilletimes.com

THE HOUSE AND SENATE: *Beacon Hill Roll Call* records local representatives' votes on roll calls from the week of Feb. 3-7, 2025. There were no roll Calls in the Senate last week.

\$425 MILLION FOR SHELTER SYSTEM (H 57)
House 126-26, approved and sent to the Senate a fiscal 2025 supplemental budget that includes \$425 million to fund the state's family shelter system and make some changes to tighten eligibility. The vote was almost strictly along party lines with all Republicans voting against it and all but two Democrats voting for it. The Democrats say the measure makes major reforms while the GOP says the bill does not go far enough.

"From the beginning of the shelter system crisis, the House has worked to reform the emergency assistance program to ensure that it remains financially viable," said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy). "That's why the House led the effort to cap the maximum length of stay, and to require job training programs for folks in the shelter system, reforms that this supplemental budget builds on. By creating stricter eligibility requirements, along with increased security measures, this supplemental budget is the latest iteration of the House's continued commitment to protecting vulnerable children and families in Massachusetts in a fiscally sustainable manner."

"Over the past several years, as the population of the emergency shelter system has grown, the House has attempted to uphold the commonwealth's right to shelter law while also being mindful of the long-term fiscal sustainability of the program," said Rep. Aaron Michlewitz (D-Boston), Chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means. "The reforms contained in this bill will ensure that right to shelter is maintained by further capping the length of stay and verifying eligibility, while also enacting stricter background checks on those who enter the shelter system to better protect the families who need these services the most."

"I voted against [the bill] because Massachusetts cannot continue pouring taxpayer money into the emergency shelter system without implementing real, lasting reforms," said Rep. Steven Xiarhos (R-Barnstable). "As a former police officer with 40 years of experience, I know firsthand how proper criminal background checks should be conducted, and the simple CORI check outlined in this bill doesn't even come close. Without comprehensive background screenings at the state, federal and international levels, we risk compromising public safety and failing to protect the communities we serve."

"Though there were some small reforms to the shelter sys-

tem, they were only temporary and fell far short of what was necessary to address the problems associated with the program," said Rep. Joseph McKenna (R-Sutton). "Without substantial and permanent reforms, many of which were proposed by Republican amendments that were unfortunately rejected out of hand without even cursory consideration, this was not a bill that will adequately address the long-term financial stability of the EA shelter program, so was not a bill I could support."

(A "Yes" vote is for the bill. A "No" vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber	Yes
Rep. Mike Connolly	Yes
Rep. Erika Uyterhoeven	Yes

BROADER BACKGROUND CHECKS (H 57)
House 26-125, rejected an amendment that would expand the background checks that the state must conduct on emergency assistance shelter applicants by mandating universal criminal background checks that include criminal records at the state, federal and international levels; immigration or residency status; and presence on international or domestic criminal watch lists.

"While the underlying bill requires individuals applying for emergency assistance housing benefits to disclose prior criminal convictions and calls for CORI checks to be conducted prior to placement, these checks are limited to crimes committed in Massachusetts," said amendment sponsor Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). "If we are serious about keeping dangerous criminals out of the shelter system, then we need to strengthen the background check requirement and mandate more comprehensive universal background checks that will disclose criminal records not only at the state level, but also at the federal and international levels."

Rep. Michael Day (D-Stoneham) said that the amendment was an attempted Republican "backdoor" to "strangle our emergency shelter law altogether and kill it from within." He said the background checks the amendment would require would also check the education backgrounds of applicants, credit scores and financial information.

"Now we want to find out the credit-worthiness of a young family applying for emergency shelter," said Day. He sarcastically asked if this credit check was going to make the shelters and residents safer -- finding out what Kohl's thinks about their ability to get a credit card."

(A "Yes" vote is for the broader background checks. A "No" vote is against them.)

Rep. Christine Barber	No
Rep. Mike Connolly	No
Rep. Erika Uyterhoeven	No

REDUCE FUNDING FROM \$425 MILLION TO \$200 MILLION
House 26-126 rejected an amendment that would reduce funding for the emergency assistance shelter program from \$425 million to \$200 million.

"The emergency assistance shelter program continues to cost the state's taxpayers approximately \$1 billion annually, which is not sustainable without implementing substantive reforms to help reduce costs and promote greater transparency," said amendment sponsor Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). "The State Auditor is currently conducting a comprehensive audit of the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, including the emergency shelter system, which should help to identify ways to improve efficiency, while recent changes in immigration laws at the federal level should help to lower costs by reducing the number of people coming to Massachusetts seeking shelter. By reducing the shelter program's funding allocation to \$200 million, the state can continue to provide core services to Massachusetts residents in need while allowing additional time to see how the recent changes will impact enrollment."

Rep. Aaron Michlewitz (D-Boston) said he is under no illusion that if the House approves this reduction, the Republicans will actually vote for the bill itself. He noted that reforms we're implementing in the bill are major and the House needs to give the Healey administration time to see these through. He argued that the bill allows the state to get through the remainder of the fiscal year, and during the upcoming fiscal 2026 budget debate in April we can see how the reforms are going and if we have to make changes.

(A "Yes" vote is for the reduction to \$200 million. A "No" vote is against the reduction.)

Rep. Christine Barber	No
Rep. Mike Connolly	No
Rep. Erika Uyterhoeven	No

12-MONTH RESIDENCY REQUIRED (H 57)
House 26-126, rejected an amendment that would require that in order to be eligible for benefits under the emergency assistance shelter program, an applicant must have resided in Massachusetts for twelve consecutive months immediately prior to the date of application. The applicant must also provide an acceptable form of verification such as tax returns; a MA REAL-ID; a

Continued on page 16

COMMENTARY

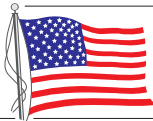
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Turn on your love light, Somerville.

Our View Of The Times



Valentine’s Day is coming around once next week, an occasion that many hold dear and cherish. For some, in fact, it is one of their favorite days of the year.

Sure, many people think it’s a corny tradition. Just another gimmick to ramp up sales of candies, cards, wine and what-not. For others, it’s a special time that provides an opportunity to express their deepest affections to the one – or many – who mean

so much to them.

Whatever one’s personal view, it’s difficult to disagree with the idea that we could all use a soft touch and a few gentle words in these times of contentious bickering and extreme divisiveness. It doesn’t take a box of chocolates or a 32-stanza love poem to show a little appreciation for one’s friends and family, or that one special someone.

Remember when we were kids, and part of the day was spent passing out those store-bought or handmade “Be My Valentine” cards at school? Some did so, while others didn’t. Still, it was a nice ritual that brought us all a little closer and exposed us to some rudimentary social skills, so important for a developing child.

What would it be like as adults to swap such tokens of sentiment with our

co-workers, colleagues, etc.? Embarrassing? Endearing? Who can say? You’ll never really know unless you try it.

If nothing else, take a moment or two on this day to smile at a stranger as you pass them by. Open a door for another. Find ways to show that you have love within you. This can be far more satisfying than giving or getting a mere box of chocolates.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

Are you a landlord or realtor in Somerville? Join Somerville’s **Office of Housing Stability** on **Thursday, February 13**, in the **Central Library Auditorium** to learn about how OHS can support you, your tenants, and your clients. Register by clicking this link <https://bit.ly/3CN-5mej> or visiting [somervillema.gov/ohs](https://www.somervillema.gov/ohs).

Join **WCVB Channel 5 News Reporter Danae Bucci** kick off the **5th Annual Rolling Lunar New Year Celebration** at

Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Avenue. A free community celebration for all ages, **Sunday, February 23**, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., doors open at 11:20 a.m. By **Korean American Citizens League of New England**. Enjoy live performances, Korean food, games, drummers, lion dance and more.

The **2025 USFM Vendor Application** is live. Interested in joining the farmers market this year? Head to <https://www.unionsquaremain.org/become-a-vendor> to apply. Application deadline is 11:59 p.m., **Sunday, February 16**.

The city is holding **COVID-19 and Flu Vaccine Clinics: Thursday, February 20**, at the **Council on Aging** (167 Holland St.) from 4:30 to 6 p.m. **Thursday, February 27**, at the **SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs** (42 Cross St.) from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Learn more and register here <https://www.somervillema.gov/vaccinations>

The **Public Safety for All Task Force** report is now live. The group is recommending that the city adopt a co-response model, implement body-worn cameras for law enforcement, consider utilizing civilians in SPD, and more. Read the full

report or the executive summary at www.somervillema.gov/psfa

Somerville’s **Condominium Review Board (CRB)** is seeking two new members. Both vacancies are for full member seats and are open to Somerville tenants. The CRB seeks two new members to serve three-year terms. The CRB is responsible for administering the city’s **Condominium Conversion Ordinance**, which governs proposed conversion of rental units to condominium units and substantial rehabilitation of existing rental units. Appointments include a \$300 monthly stipend. Learn more and *Continued on page 21*

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's
Olio
#961

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

1. Who is known as the "Father of Black History"?

2. Who was the first singer to perform at a Super Bowl Halftime Show?

3. What artist had the most-watched Super Bowl Halftime Show to date?

4. What famous jeweler makes the Lombardi Trophy?

5. What player has played in the most Super Bowls?

6. Who was the first female athlete to win a Nobel Prize?
7. Which team won the first Super Bowl in 1967?

8. Which animal is known for its ability to change color?

9. What Valentine's Day candy was first created on equipment made for lozenges?

10. In what country is Valentine's Day known as "Friend's Day"?

11. What is Galentine's Day?

12. James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the structure of what molecule?

Answers on page 14

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. There are 32 muscles in a cat's ear.
2. A giraffe can clean its ears with its 21-inch tongue.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

THE 1960s

ACROSS

1. Unit of electrical capacity F
6. Knicks' org.
9. Herring's cousin
13. City in Belgium
14. The Beatles hit "Drive My ____"
15. Monument to Buddha
16. Like beer at a kegger (2 words)
17. Affirmative to captain
18. Like a beaver?
19. Che's last name
21. Stonewall riots location
23. Division of time
24. West African country
25. Refuse to comply
28. The Jackson 5 co-founder
30. Don ____ of Barney Fife fame
35. Soon, to a bard
37. Hyperbolic tangent
39. Sunlight's interference
40. Apollo Moon Landing org.
41. Operatic solos
43. Alexander Hamilton/Aaron Burr incident
44. Deposit the ashes
46. Related to ear
47. Meat in a can
48. Transport onward, as in letter (2 words)
50. Not written
52. Pilot's estimate, acr.
53. Ill-mannered one
55. Hawaiian welcome wreath
57. Ford's pony car
61. Assassinated president
65. "____ death do us part"
66. Down Under runner
68. Hindu caste
69. Moonshine maker
70. Spock's was pointy
71. Comforter stuffing
72. Ruptured
73. Ground cover
74. Coach-and-four

DOWN

1. Use a cat o' nine tails
2. Hokkaido language
3. Network of nerves
4. Mojave plant

CROSSWORD											
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10
13						14				15	
16						17				18	
19					20			21	22		
			23				24				
25	26	27		28		29			30	31	32
35			36		37			38		39	
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				53		54			55		56
57	58	59	60					61			62
65						66	67			68	
69						70				71	
72						73				74	

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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

A	D	A	M			V	I	A			T	O	T
H	O	Y	A			B	E	N	D		S	C	O
A	G	A	R			U	R	S	A		K	O	R
		S	H	O	U	L	D	E	R		E	R	I
			O	R	B	I	T				O	W	N
P	L	U	N	G	E			A	R	S	E	N	A
E	E	N		E	D	G	I	N	G		R	A	G
R	A	F	T	S		A	C	T		A	S	S	A
D	R	E	W		O	N	E	I	L	L		A	P
U	N	D	O	I	N	G				O	O	D	L
			E	N	E			C	A	N	O	E	
		P	I	N	G			C	O	L	D	F	E
O	U	T	D	O			A	L	T	O		P	I
C	R	E	S	T			K	O	A	N		E	R
A	R	M					E	R	R			N	E

5. Go away

6. March Madness org.

7. * ____ of Pigs, failed military operation

8. Madison Square Garden, e.g.

9. Command to Fido

10. Designer Boss

11. Copycat

12. Sinister side in "Star Wars"

15. Garment-making

20. Yogurt-based dip

22. Benevolent one

24. Hall order keeper

25. Joplin of "Summertime" fame

26. Foolish

27. Same as boatswain

29. Tropical tuber

31. Auto pioneer

32. Brownish gray

33. Something yummy
34. Certain march starting point

36. Backgammon predecessor

38. Place for a flower

42. Part of mermaid's tale

45. Cricket umpire's call (2 words)

49. Not, prefix

51. Optical devices

54. S-shaped moldings

56. Arctic people

57. Necessary thing

58. Archaic preposition

59. Bob Marley's hit " ____ It Up"

60. Fresco piece

61. Kurdistan native

62. Cocoyam

63. Fortune-telling coffee remnants

64. Ready and eager

67. *Zedong of Cultural Revolution
- Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Community Gospel concerts celebrate their 20th year



By Barbara Allys

“I love getting people of different ages and backgrounds together to sing,” says Stacie Clayton, founder and director of the annual Community Gospel Choir concerts, which have been held in honor of Black History Month almost every February since 2005.

The singers in these joyful, spirited concerts are of all races and backgrounds, and come from Somerville, Medford, Cambridge, Boston and other local communities. The only requirements for performing in these yearly concerts are the enjoyment

of singing with other people and a love for gospel music.

Clayton, who is originally from Jamaica and came to the U.S. at age 18, has helped lead the weekly music program at the Somerville Community Baptist Church since 1994. She explains that in order to reach a wide audience, the Community Gospel concerts have been held in a variety of locations over the years, including Tufts University, Medford’s Chevalier Theater, and at churches in Medford, Norwood, and other nearby towns. “This event is free and entertaining for all ages,” Clayton says.

This year’s Community Gos-

pel Choir concert will take place Sunday, February 23, 5 pm at the Somerville Community Baptist Church, 31 College Avenue, two blocks from the Davis Square T-station. The theme of this year’s concert is “Heaven.”

The singers will be accompanied by an ensemble of professional jazz musicians and the concert will be emceed by Medford’s former Poet Laureate Terry E. Carter. For more information, see www.ilovescbc.org.

Barbara Allys is a long-time Somerville resident who enjoys Gospel music and has attended these concerts for many years.

June Bug restaurant wins award

CONT. FROM PG 1

well as semi-private or private dining.

Purchase gift cards for any occasion via June Bug’s website.

Log onto their website at <https://www.junebugrestaurant.com/>, or contact them at 617-718-0569 if you have any questions.

The restaurant is open for dinner on Mondays to Wednesdays from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and on Thursdays to Saturdays from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

So, in addition to amazing pizza,



cious “Maria’s Flan,” “Sourdough Brownie” or an ice cream “Scoop du Jour” at June Bug. Let your tastebuds party.

The Somerville Times Historical Fact of the Week



Eagle feathers #322

This article first appeared in the January 8, 2020, edition of The Somerville Times.

King George

By Bob (Monty) Doherty

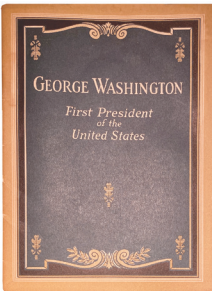
At the end of the victorious eight-year American Revolutionary War, some of his officers wanted to crown him “King.” They had grown to love and respect their leader and wanted him to continue to lead the country that they had fought for. General George Washington, the object of their honor and devotion, resolutely turned them down. He reminded them that they had just fought and won a war for freedom, not for a monarchy.



Reflecting back to the war’s beginning, his original directive had been to organize the first American Army, which was made up primarily of ragtag farmers and frontiersmen. He then rescued Boston, which was occupied by the British Army. From his headquarters in Cambridge and his Prospect Hill summit, he planned and executed what was to be his first famous victory ... the bloodless evacuation of Boston.

Who was he?

- At the early age of 16, this Virginian was already a gifted horseman. He later became the Assistant Surveyor of the Shenandoah Valley and the following year became its official Surveyor.
- He became



Continued on page 12

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THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION –
HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING
Project File No. 119537

Two Public Informational Meetings will be held by MassDOT to discuss the Maffa Way/Mystic Avenue Bridge Superstructure Replacements project in Somerville and Charlestown.

WHERE: Schrafft’s City Center, Café (1st Floor)
529 Main St
Charlestown, MA 02129

WHEN: **Monday, February 24, 2025, at 6:00 PM**

WHERE: Somerville Public Library
Central Branch
79 Highland Ave
Somerville, MA 02143

WHEN: **Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 6:00 PM**

PURPOSE: The purpose of the meetings is to provide the public an overview of upcoming revisions to traffic alignments, bike paths and bus lanes at Lombardi Street, as well as an update on plans for Phase 2 construction and the Orange Line shutdown in May 2025. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments. The same information will be presented at both meetings.

ABOUT THE PROJECT: This project consists of replacing the two deteriorated bridge superstructures of the Maffa Way and Mystic Avenue bridges over the MBTA Orange Line and Commuter Rail lines in Boston and Somerville. The project will improve public safety, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accommodations by addressing substandard bridge conditions. The project will be integrated with adjacent projects, such as Assembly Square, Rutherford Avenue, and the One Mystic development. Visit www.mass.gov/MaffaMystic for more information.

The locations are accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (including but not limited to interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, open or closed captioning for videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats, such as audio tapes, Braille and large print), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT’s Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), fax (857-368-0602), TTD/TTY (857-368-0603) or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible prior to the meeting, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten (10) business days before the meeting.

In the event of inclement weather a cancellation announcement will be posted at www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

CARRIE E. LAVALLEE
CHIEF ENGINEER

2/12/25 The Somerville Times

NOTICE OF TIER CLASSIFICATION
299 BROADWAY
SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
RTN 3-38593

A release of oil and/or hazardous materials has occurred at this location, which is a disposal site as defined by M.G.L. c. 21E, § 2 and the Massachusetts Contingency Plan, 310 CMR 40.0000. To evaluate the release, a Phase I Initial Site Investigation was performed pursuant to 310 CMR 40.0480. The site has been classified as Tier II pursuant to 310 CMR 40.0500. On **February 5, 2025**, 299 Broadway Owner, LLC filed a Tier II Classification Submittal with the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). To obtain more information on this disposal site, please contact Matthew P. Heil, P.E., LSP, Sanborn, Head & Associates, Inc., 6 Bedford Farms Drive, Suite 201, Bedford, NH 03110, (978) 577-1021. The Tier Classification Submittal and the disposal site file can be viewed at the MassDEP website using Release Tracking Number (RTN) 3-38593 at <http://public.dep.state.ma.us/SearchableSites2/Search.aspx> or at the MassDEP Northeast Region Office, 150 Presidential Way, Woburn, MA 01801, (978) 694-3200. Additional public involvement opportunities are available under 310 CMR 40.1403(9) and 310 CMR 40.1404

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ADVERTISEMENT

SHA Job No. P-R-92025

The **Somerville Housing Authority** invites sealed bids from Vendors to supply and deliver New Refrigerators and New Stoves to our Somerville, Massachusetts location/s, in accordance with the documents prepared by the Somerville Housing Authority Purchasing Department Job No. P-R-92025.

Description of Work: Supply and deliver New Refrigerators and New Stoves to Somerville, MA address.

Bids are subject to provisions of M.G.L. c.30B

Term of contract is 3 years or 1 year if alternate is chosen.

The work is estimated to cost \$220,000.00 for 3-years or \$70,000.00 for 1 -year alternate

Sealed Bids will be received until 2:00 P.M., on February 27, 2025, opened forthwith at the Somerville Housing Authority, Administrative Offices, 30 Memorial Road, Somerville, MA 02145.

Bid and Contract Documents will be available for download on Somerville Housing Authority’s web site www.sha-web.org, under our bid opportunities tab by 2:00 P.M., on February 12, 2025. Updates and addendums will be posted on website. Bidders are responsible for downloading and including updates, and addendum/s with their bid.

If you are submitting a bid, you must register with Anthony Crespo by email at Tonyc@sha-web.org and provide contact information including, telephone number, and email. You will receive a reply that your email has been received. Bidders\Contractors are responsible for ensuring that their email and bids are received.

Mailed or delivered bids should be brought or sent to Somerville Housing Authority, Purchasing Department, New Refrigerators and New Stoves Bid, Attn. Anthony Crespo, 30 Memorial Road, Somerville, MA 02145 no later than the specified time. A mail slot is provided if you would like to drop off after hours.

You may also email bid documents to SHAPurchasingbids@SHA-Web.Org. Emailed Bids will not be opened until the due date and time. If emailing **Title subject line SHA Job No. P-R-92025 -your company name**. Contact Anthony Crespo by email at Tonyc@sha-web.org to enquire if your email was received. Do not include bid when inquiring if the bid was received.

2/12/25 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
IFB #25-49

The City of Somerville, through the Procurement and Contracting Services Department, invites sealed bids for:

Somerville Young Tree Training Program

An Invitation for Bid (IFB) may be obtained online at www.bidexpress.com, <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement>, or from the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 on or after **Wednesday, February 12, 2025**. Sealed bids will be received at above office until: **2:00PM Thursday, February 27, 2025**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all bids if, in her sole judgment, the best interest of the City of Somerville would be served by so doing.

Please email Felisa Garate at fgarate@somervillema.gov for more information.

5% Bid deposit required.

Felisa Garate
Procurement Analyst
617-625-6600 x3406

2/12/25 The Somerville Times

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www.TheSomervilleTimes.com



City of Somerville
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The **Somerville Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)** will hold a virtual public hearing on **Wednesday, February 19, 2025**, at 6:00pm through Zoom.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov.

TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_KJJUHJl9Sg6RpNK_wr70Tw
Webinar ID: 831 8343 8980

TO CALL IN

An attendee must register for the meeting online in order for a call-in number to be emailed to them by Zoom.

The Zoning Board will consider the following pursuant to M.G.L. 40A and the Somerville Zoning Ordinance:

59 Linden Street Fan Wang seeks a Major Amendment to a previously issued Special Permit (ZBA 2019-96) under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a non-conforming structure.

34 Allen Street Chris Ulrich seeks a Special Permit for a conforming entry canopy on a nonconforming principle building type for the NR zoning district.

Development review application submittal materials and other documentation may be viewed online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/planning-and-zoning/reports-and-decisions>.

Interested persons may provide comments to the Zoning Board of Appeals at the hearing or by submitting written comments by email to ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov.

2/5/25, 2/12/25 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Somerville City Council’s Land Use Committee and the Somerville Planning Board will hold a joint public hearing on **Thursday, February 20th, 2025** at 6:30 pm. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this hearing will be conducted via remote participation.

REGISTER ONLINE

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZuR40J6b02Cgq3DCtwt4tQ

The purpose of this hearing is to receive public comments concerning the following:

- Horace-Ward LLC, Bealm Realty, LLC, Delhi Properties, LLC, and Delhi Properties II, LLC requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning district of 11 Horace Street, 5-7, 9, 13, and 15 Ward Street, and 15 and 21 South Street from Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) to Mid-Rise 6 (MR6).

Zoning amendments may be viewed online by searching the Somerville City Council’s [online meeting calendar](https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement) (<https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement>). Comments must be received no later than 12 Noon the day of the Hearing to ensure they are conveyed to the Committee for inclusion with the hearing testimony. The Chair(s) may opt to extend the period for written comments, in which case additional comments will be accepted until the date indicated. This information can be found in the minutes of the meeting.

Final language of the above amendments may be modified by the City Council during the legislative process. Persons unable to attend the hearing may provide comments by email to the Planning Board and the City Council at publiccomments@somervillema.gov. Comments must be received no later than 12 Noon the day of the Hearing to ensure they are conveyed to the Committee for inclusion with the hearing testimony. The Chair(s) may opt to extend the period for written comments, in which case additional comments will be accepted until the date indicated. This information can be found in the minutes of the meeting.

2/5/25, 2/12/25 The Somerville Times

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CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING
& COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LEGAL NOTICE - HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC)

The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will hold a public meeting and public hearings on **Tuesday, March 4, 2025** at 6:45pm on the following applications, in accordance with the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and/or the City of Somerville Code of Ordinances, Pt. II, Chap. 7, Sections 7-16 – 7-28.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to historic@somervillema.gov.

TO USE A COMPUTER

Registration URL:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9tJ6tGis8nM2Dw>

Webinar ID: 822 0548 0435

TO CALL IN

An attendee must register for the meeting online in order for a call-in number to be emailed to them by Zoom.

ALL OF THE CASES ADVERTISED BELOW HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING COMPONENT

Alterations to Local Historic District (LHD) Properties

HP25-000001 – 148 Morrison Avenue

Applicant: ThoughtCraft Architects LLC
Owner: M. Leighton Collis and Catherine Collis
The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter a LHD property by demolishing the rear portion of the building and constructing an attached addition.

DETERMINATIONS OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE (STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)

HP24-000111 - 15 Chester Place

Applicant: Law Office of Richard G. DiGirolamo
Owner: Bronwyn & Anthony Mastrangelo
The Applicant seeks to demolish a building that is at least 75 years of age.

HP24-000119 - 60 Franklin Street

Applicant: Picker Construction- Pablo Picker
Owner: Shelley J. Milligan
The Applicant seeks to demolish a building constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.

Case documents reviewed by the HPC are available on the City website at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation/hpc-cases>. Cases may be continued to a later date; please check the agenda (posted 48 hours in advance of the meeting) on the City website or email historic@somervillema.gov to inquire if specific cases will be heard. Continued cases will not be re-advertised. **Note:** Written comments due to historic@somervillema.gov **NO LATER THAN NOON** one week prior to the meeting date. Email historic@somervillema.gov with inquiries.

2/12/25 The Somerville Times

Concerns raised at committee meeting regarding our seniors

By Lexi O’Neil

Concerns are on the rise as Seniors are at the forefront of the Monday, February 3, meeting held by the Equity, Gender, Seniors, Families and Vulnerable Populations Committee. Some of the topics on the agenda varied from helping seniors deal with the grocery inflation prices to ensuring their voices are being represented and heard in council meetings and decisions.

Transportation and Accessibility Challenges

Councilor Strezo compliments the council’s efforts, especially in terms of their senior transportation, despite the competitive programs in the surrounding area. She shares a personal story of how one of the competing companies left her deaf grandmother alone in Davis Square, without aid or a ride. Strezo notes, “Sometimes it could take literally five hours to get to one medical appointment. This is their whole day. Would any of us sit through a five-hour waiting period to go sometimes a mile? That is what a lot of seniors have to deal with.”

Councilor Strezo challenged city programs again when concerns such as parking being inaccessible to seniors were dismissed. She voices how our older folks cannot walk five blocks for a funeral or church just because a program assumes them to be able-bodied, and should be more aware of the reality and respect that our seniors deserve to park near their churches, favorite restaurants, and more within the community because they, too, are valued members who deserve an equal standing in.

Recent Transportation Changes and Budget Updates



Members of the city’s Equity, Gender, Seniors, Families and Vulnerable Populations Committee have expressed concerns over the quality of transportation options provided for our senior population. — Photo by Bobbie Toner

The most recent change to transportation was upped from residents being able to go grocery shopping just once a week to twice a week, thanks to the budget oversights by our council members. Members brought up struggling to find information efficiently via the council’s website, but they did promise to be working on it and are aware that their programs are evolving faster than their being able to keep up with the changes.

As long as seniors are over the age of 60, or have a permanent disability, they receive the benefit of the transportation services per the budgets offered. The hot meals and cold meal-to-go project is offered to residents multiple times a week, which helps to bridge some of the gaps in food insecurity while new budgets are being reviewed in the meantime.

Budget and Inflation Concerns

The council is working hard to ensure that there is enough funds to go around, and the program has

continued to grow in recent years as they work to review new changes and additional funding options. However, concerns related to budgets and inflation are being raised due to the current standing of our political climate.

Improving Communication and Outreach

The council is considering changes on how to better share their information in order to help their residents to get connected. They do make consistent posts on social media and ensure information is passed on to other entities, such as us here at *The Somerville Times*, and always working to be mindful of the older members of our community. They recently met with the Mass Senior Action Council in order to work on their outreach and future planning, and to continue collaborating with other project partners to ensure the maximum outreach and resolutions to current issues among the community.

School construction plans

CONT. FROM PG 5

the need for a decision that best serves students and the community.

Another significant issue raised was the Proposition 2 1/2 debt exclusion, which would require voter approval for a tax increase to fund the new school construction. Council members stressed the importance of gaining public support for the increase, acknowledging that strong

communication and community buy-in would be essential for success.

Key Takeaways

• The city will continue looking for potential locations for the Winter Hill School, taking into account factors like open space preservation and accessibility.

• Selecting an architect and site will begin in mid 2025, with a goal of fi-

nalizing plans by the end of the year.

• Council members stressed the need for clear and transparent communication to ensure a successful school building project.

The next committee meeting will revisit these issues and continue efforts to reach a community driven resolution for the future of the city’s schools.

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CONTACT US
BY 12 PM MONDAY
PHONE: 857-488-5138

COMMENTARY

The views and opinions expressed in the commentaries and letters to the Editor of The Somerville Times do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of The Somerville Times, its publishers or staff.

Community Benefits from Somernova



By Chris Dwan

The mood was cautiously optimistic at the Argenziano School cafeteria on a Wednesday night a couple of weeks ago. Nearly a hundred people gathered in person, and another 80 or so joined online, to see the Union Square Neighborhood Council [1] and Rafi Properties [2] share a “mid-point update” in their negotiations towards a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) for the proposed “Somernova” [3] development.

The organizers were at pains to make clear that, contrary to a recent Cambridge Day article [4], the meeting was not any sort of conclusion. No final deal was to be announced and no commitments have been inked. This is in part because so much relies on the city-run process [5] to update the underlying zoning along central Somerville Ave. That parallel process is expected to submit zoning text for consideration by the City Council, well, sometime real soon now. Once the zoning is submitted, the CBA will be finalized, meaning that the city council will have

all the needed specifics in hand prior to any vote.

Within those limitations, Wednesday was intended to share points on which the negotiating team had reached “consensus.” There were no handouts or summaries. The slides, which are no longer online, were mostly just a table of contents anyway. In later conversations I learned that the negotiating team had worked in silos – divvying up topics without working through the compromises that, in my experience, constitute the bulk of this sort negotiation. Put another way, it seems likely to me that some of this will necessarily be walked back when the budgetary rubber meets the road.

For all that, the announcements were good and well received:

- Arts and Creative Enterprise (ACE) will be 8% of the development, a total of more than 100,000 square feet.
- An “advisory team” will guide the process of filling the ACE space, and Somerville artists will get priority for public exhibitions.
- Housing will be included, and the payment to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (a linkage fee), will be higher than required by current zoning.
- The project has agreed to track metrics on traffic, parking, and transit and to pause work if predetermined goals are not met.
- The Community Center



The community benefits update meeting was well attended.

will be at least 12k square feet, plus another 7k square feet of indoors multi-purpose space, and will be run by a still-to-be-formed nonprofit. The developer will provide 10 years of operating funding, after which the nonprofit will transition to grant and philanthropic support.

- The project will include a call center to field construction complaints and facilitate communications.
- USNC wants, and Rafi is open to, a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) with the trade unions. Rafi has committed, at least verbally, to preferentially employing Somerville residents and women, and to working with the high school to support vocational careers for recent graduates.
- The buildings will all be net zero or better, and the commercial buildings will be LEED [6] Platinum.
- Rafi has committed to us-

ing 100% native species in the plantings, to planting at least 150 trees, to not using chemical rodenticides, and to installing raptor habitats.

The change in tone from the meetings in the fall of 2023 was remarkable. Gone was the tone-deaf boosterism from the project team and its close allies. Gone too was the razor sharp and occasionally brutal opposition from the neighborhood. Even the small group of neighbors who showed up on Wednesday still ready to oppose the whole thing seem to have read the room and moderated their comments. In the place of all that, I saw mutual understanding, better defined roles, and collegial working relationships that will be essential for a project of this scale. The developer is no longer trying to wholesale rewrite zoning -and- propose their project -and- sugar coat it with incentives and benefits. It has taken

a while, but the city is working the zoning, the neighborhood is advocating for itself, and the developer will eventually have clear guard rails within which to design a project.

Honestly, watching my neighborhood work through this is giving me a tiny sliver of much needed hope for democracy and civic process right about now.

We’re not done, but we’re finally getting somewhere.

Links:

- [1] <https://sites.google.com/view/usnc>
- [2] <https://rafiproperties.com/>
- [3] <https://somernova.com/>
- [4] <https://www.cambridge-day.com/2025/01/20/somernova-community-benefits-presentation-wednesday-brings-group-with-other-concerns/>
- [5] <https://voice.somervillema.gov/cen-som-ave>
- [6] <https://www.usgbc.org/leed>

Historical Fact

CONT. FROM PG 9

part of the Virginia Militia, rose to the rank of Colonel, and was responsible for its frontier defenses. He joined the staff of the British during the French and Indian War and tried to instruct them to fight like the Indians, instead of marching into battle in close formation wearing brilliantly colored uniforms.

• When fighting and bloodshed followed the passing of the Boston Port Bill, he told the Virginia Assembly, “I will raise

one thousand men, subsist them at my own expense, and march, myself at their head, for the relief of Boston.”

• He was forty-two and a Virginia delegate when the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia on September 5, 1774. This meeting was three days after the British attack on our Powder House, which drew over twenty thousand armed patriots to the location. It proved to be the dress rehearsal of the Concord and Lex-

ington Battle eight months later.

• On hearing reports of the Battle of Lexington and Concord, Washington originally refused to lead the Patriots. He viewed the conflict as a skirmish. But after hearing the results of the Battle of Bunker Hill, he agreed to lead them.

• On arrival in Massachusetts, he wanted to see the view of Boston from Prospect Hill before he met with colonial leaders at Cambridge. Six months later on January 1, 1776,

he raised the first American flag on that site.

It is said that King George III stated that General Washington would be “The greatest man in the world” if he retired after the Revolutionary War. Americans agreed and elected him our first President. He is considered the father of our country.

George Washington...

“First in War”

“First in Peace”

“First in the Hearts of his Countrymen”

Black Cat Rescue approves of declawing ban

By Harry Kane

A new law signed by Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey makes it illegal to declaw felines. That's good news for cats and for foster operations like Black Cat Rescue, which is a Somerville based all-volunteer network dedicated to saving the lives of homeless black cats and cats with special needs.

The cat act (S.2552) prohibits inhumane feline declawing except in rare situations of medical necessity. The act was signed into law January 9 and takes effect on April 8.

"From a rescue perspective, the biggest thing we see, if we are getting declawed cats surrendered to us, is it's nearly always for a behavioral issue," said Jennifer Stott, co-founder of Black Cat Rescue.

Black Cat Rescue is a nonprofit organization that began in 2007 to provide black cats and cats with medical and behavioral issues a healing, therapeutic foster home to facilitate the adoption process.

Stott founded the organization along with co-founder Samantha McDuffee, and their operation has grown from 60 cats per year to 100 cats. While their no-kill cat rescue organization is smaller than most, they specialize in what she refers to as "undercats," which are cats that have a harder time getting adopted.

Black cats and cats with special needs have a difficult time getting adopted, explained Stott. The foster home-based cat

rescue organization has about 20 active foster homes at any given time, which are within a 30-minute radius of Somerville.

The medical, safety and behavioral risks associated with cat declawing had animal advocates calling the practice inhumane, which has led to the ban on declawing in Massachusetts.

Cat declawing is an amputation procedure that removes the last bone of each toe including the nail bed and claw, akin to removing a human finger at the first knuckle.

In addition to a painful recovery, Stott says cats that have undergone the amputation procedure will exhibit "emotional dysregulation" resulting in aversion to litter boxes and a tendency to bite. Numerous studies point to a correlation between declawing and personality changes.

Stott says her organization doesn't receive many cats that have been declawed and that in the recent past most veterinarians have refused to do the procedure unless it is medically necessary.

The all-volunteer network fosters homeless cats, whether they be feral or stray cats, owner surrenders, cats from local shelters or cats from other rescue organizations.

"Some cats go up for adoption more quickly than others...some need more intervention," Stott explains. "These are people that want to volunteer their time and their homes to taking care of homeless cats. It's wonderful for the cats because they get a home life and are treated just like a pet cat while they are waiting



Midnight is a 4-year-old female black cat that Black Cat Rescue has been fostering after a dog bite. She is looking forward to being adopted soon!
— Photos courtesy of Jennifer Stott



While under the care of Black Cat Rescue, Midnight has received acupuncture and cold laser therapy following a tail amputation.

to be adopted."

Stott works with these foster caregivers to assist in the cat's recovery and stays in constant communication to determine the correct form of care needed. In certain cases, a licensed behaviorist attends to the cat.

All the cats require some kind of veterinarian care – from vaccinations to chemotherapy to surgeries – and Stott says they've had many medical success stories. "We give our cats every medical chance that they can have," Stott said.

For example, a 4-year-old special needs female cat named Midnight is in a foster home and is awaiting adoption. Midnight came to Black Cat Rescue with a severe spinal injury after a dog attack that left

her incontinent and with a dead tail. Midnight's tail had to be amputated, and she has received acupuncture and cold laser therapy to assist in her recovery. Her incontinence has become more manageable and she has shown "remarkable resilience and strength."

Black Cat Rescue stays operational thanks to generous donations that come from animal lovers in Somerville and Greater Boston. On their website, a support page provides information about various ways to help fund their organization. Visitors can also find cats available for adoption.

Their website has more information: www.BlackCatRescue.com.



Peekaboo is the black and white cat that the rescue organization helped with a leg amputation. He is doing much better thanks to the surgery. He is in this picture cuddling with his new brother Lino.

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Answers

1. Dr. Carter G. Woodson, started the first Negro History Week in 1926

2. Carol Channing (1970)

3. Kendrick Lamar (2025)

4. Tiffany & Co.

5. Tom Brady, QB

6. Marie Skłodowska-Curie (Nobel Prize

in Physics, 1903)

7. Green Bay Packers

8. Chameleon

9. Sweethearts Candy Hearts

10. Finland

11. Holiday that celebrates women's friendship on February 13

12. DNA

Griddled and baked - the art of Vinal Bakery and Vinal General Store

By Jeffrey Shwom

Now, I jokingly tell friends that I have never cared much about British things since we revolted in 1775. When Prince William and Princess Kate visited Greentown Labs in 2022, I went to Market Basket that day in support of local business (plus the parking lot was empty due to heavy security and road closures).

Revolution aside, when I learned that English muffins, much like the bagel, have really become an American story, my interest was piqued. And to then learn that Sarah Murphy's story of creating her wonderful English muffins was similar to the originator of the American version of the bread, well...

According to gourmet food purveyor Harry & David [1], British expat Samuel Bath Thomas "found work in a New York City bakery and developed his own version of what he later trademarked as the English muffin. In 1880, he launched his own bakery and sold...a pre-cut, thinner version known for its signature nooks and crannies."

Sarah, Owner and Pastry Chef of Vinal Bakery and Vinal General Store (and Somerville resident), created her version of the English muffin after working her way through the local bakery scene. She worked a long time at Joanne Chang's Flour Bakery + Cafe, knowing she always wanted her own place with a great breakfast sandwich. So, she gained experience post-Flour "at a few professional shops so (the idea) was not a Flour duplicate." Lucky for us, she ended up at Cambridge's award winning Bagelsaurus. Mary Ting Hyatt started Bagelsaurus as a pop up in

Brookline and Sarah got to hone her English muffins skills there.

What makes an English muffin? I got schooled quickly. "An English muffin has to be griddled, and has to be able to, like, hold a sandwich," Sarah deftly relayed. "If you do not griddle, it is not an English muffin. If you cannot split it open, it's a pancake. Ours are a little bigger so we finish them in the oven so they are not doughy." Some of the currently available English muffin flavors include multigrain, pumpernickel (flavor of the month), French toast, and classic. The English muffin egg and cheese sandwiches (think of "Miss Maple" with her cheddar cheese and maple butter, or the "Sausage McVinal" with an over medium egg, cheddar cheese, turkey sausage, and spicy mayo) are divine. They even have a griddled meatloaf sandwich that was featured on Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives.

When Vinal Bakery opened, there was hesitation about not offering another bread. Sarah told me days before opening, "we were still thinking about two other breads. We thought 'let's ride with English muffins for a while.'" And they have never turned back and in fact, have turned their small business game up.

Known for their "Sandos, Suds, sundries & soft serve," sister spot Vinal General Store next door has more of a lunch focus. The menu offers deli sandwiches, coffee and espresso, beer and wine, and soft serve, alongside food gifts and treats. Sarah said that is it "our take on retail goods." They carry a mix of small, niche, US-made items. "They fit the food gifts (category). Great things to bring to a host of a party." It is quite literally their take on a New England general store. The name



Vinal Bakery and Vinal General Store's Sarah Murphy (left) and Chloe Nolan (right).

— Photos by Brian Samuels (www.briansamuelsphotography.com)



Vinal is an ode to the street she's lived on in Somerville and whose namesake, Robert A. Vinal, owned a mercantile building [2] in Union Square that sold grains and groceries. Moreover, Sarah is from New Hampshire and Chloe Nolan, director of operations, who helped open the general store, is from the South Shore.

Sarah retold, "I opened (the bakery) very intentionally with a business plan. The general store was the opposite. It was 'Let's build a business plan to fit the space.'" Post-pandemic, a good relationship with the landlord and a fire in a laundromat created an opportunity for expansion. "The landlord converted it to a white box and we said, 'let's take it.' It

gives us more space for the bakery." Yum for all those involved.

Vinal Bakery and Vinal General Store are at 222 and 220 Somerville Avenue respectively, on the backside of the Police Headquarters and across from Rococo Florist. Visit www.vinalbakery.com and www.vinalgeneralstore.com.

Links:

[1] https://www.harryanddavid.com/articles/food-drink/origin-of-english-muffins?srsltid=AfmBOor6TrV-7vyAVi9hQme1LQYbD90ZY4Y8IN-jby1uChN_aUPwq78T_s

[2] <https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/115609>

Beacon Hill Roll call CONT. FROM PG 6

utility bill, lease or mortgage; or pay stubs showing Massachusetts employment. The residency requirement would not apply to victims of domestic violence or to any person whose living situation has been affected by a fire or other natural disaster that occurred in the Bay State.

“The original Right to Shelter law was implemented more than 40 years ago to help provide housing assistance for Massachusetts residents in need, particularly pregnant women and children,” said amendment sponsor Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). “Over the last two years, the scope of the program has expanded to the point that people are coming to Massachusetts from other states seeking assistance, which is not in keeping with the original intent of the law. This amendment will restore the focus of the law to prioritize Massachusetts residents in need of housing services.”

Rep. Alice Peisch (D-Wellesley) said that we are talking about families with children and to place further restrictions on this program during the cold winter months is cruel. She noted that the bill already places more significant verification requirements regarding residency.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the 12-month residency requirement. A “No” vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber	No
Rep. Mike Connolly	No
Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven	No

REQUIRE REPORTS (H 57)

House 152-0, approved an amendment that would require the Healey administration to report the number of families exiting the emergency assistance housing program each week because of a durational limit.

“This data will reveal whether families are leaving because they’ve secured stable housing or due to the system’s time constraints,” said amendment sponsor Rep. Michael Finn (D-West Springfield) It will determine if current resources are effectively helping families regain stability in a quick and efficient manner, or if future adjustments to the system are needed.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the amendment.)

Rep. Christine Barber	Yes
Rep. Mike Connolly	Yes
Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven	Yes

RULING OF THE CHAIR ON ICE DETAINER AMENDMENT(H 57)

House 128-24, supported the ruling of the chair that a proposed amendment that would have required the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities to collaborate with ICE regarding detainees issued for dangerous criminal aliens, was beyond the scope of the shelter bill and should not be allowed on the House floor for debate.

Rep. Marc Lombardo (R-Billerica), the sponsor of the amendment said that the amendment would make it clear that we want these monsters off the streets and will take proactive actions to protect Massachusetts residents.

He urged members to oppose the ruling of the chair so that his amendment can be debated and voted upon. “It is simply outrageous that this amendment was ruled out of scope as it pertained to the operations of the shelter system which was the exact scope of the underlying bill,” said Lombardo. “The reality is that the majority party realized it would be a terrible amendment for them to vote against so instead, they ruled it out of scope to prevent political embarrassment.”

Rep. Danielle Gregoire (D-Marlborough) supported the ruling of the chair that this amendment is beyond the scope of this narrowly tailored funding bill. She added that there are several pieces of legislation that have been filed this session that will deal with this issue and the House can debate the issue at that time.

(A “Yes” vote supports the ruling of the chair that prohibits the amendment from being debated and voted upon on by the House. A “No” vote is against the ruling and favors the amendment being debated and voted upon.)

Rep. Christine Barber	Yes
Rep. Mike Connolly	Yes
Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven	Yes

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

GOV. MAURA HEALEY ANNOUNCES SHE WILL RUN FOR RE-ELECTION IN 2026 – In a radio interview on WGBH Radio (89.7 FM) with talk show hosts Jim Braude and Margery Eagan, Gov. Healey said she plans to run for reelection in 2026.

“There’s a heck of a lot more to do, she said. “And so I plan to run for re-election. I’m really proud of the record so far.”

The Massachusetts Republican Party released a statement saying they were “confident that voters will reject another four years of the Healey-Driscoll Administration and elect a common-sense Republican.”

“We are actively engaging with several Republicans who would all make strong candidates, and we are confident we will have a formidable challenger ready to take on Healey and restore prosperity to the commonwealth,” Massachusetts Republican Party Chair Amy Carnevale said.

\$850,000 TO HELP YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES – Gov. Healey announced more than \$850,000 in grants to fund several organizations that provide job training, employment placement and post placement services for 119 young adults with disabilities.

“We are building a strong workforce in Massachusetts, and this includes providing opportunities and training for individuals who face barriers to employment,” said Gov. Healey. “These grants will help develop and fulfill the immense potential of this segment of our workforce as we create an economy for today and tomorrow.”

“The Healey-Driscoll Administration is committed to working with partners to increase access, break down barriers and create pathways to meaningful employment including for individuals with disabilities,” said Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Lauren Jones. “We appreciate the partnership with awarded organizations as we work together to strengthen employment outcomes, foster inclusivity and advance economic opportunities for individuals with disabilities in Massachusetts’ workforce.”

ATTORNEY GENERAL CAMPBELL ON PROTECTING ACCESS TO GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE – Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell and a coalition of twelve other attorneys general issued a statement reaffirming their commitment to protecting access to gender-affirming care following a recent executive order by the Trump Administration.

“As state attorneys general, we stand firmly in support of healthcare policies that respect the dignity and rights of all people,” read the statement. “Health care decisions should be made by patients, families and doctors, not by a politician trying to use his power to restrict your freedoms. Gender-affirming care is essential, life-saving medical treatment that supports individuals in living as their authentic selves.”

The statement continued, “The Trump Administration’s recent executive order is wrong on the science and the law. Despite what the Trump Administration has suggested, there is no connection between “female genital mutilation” and gender-affirming care, and no federal law makes gender-affirming care unlawful. President Trump cannot change that by executive order.”

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“The loss of these three workers is not just a statistic. It is a devastating reminder of the human cost of inadequate safety practices.” — Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) Executive Director Tati-ana Sofia Begault on recent reports that three Massachusetts workers died in less than two weeks.

“The history of Black Americans is deeply woven into the patchwork fabric and rich legacy of our country. A people who survived the torment of enslavement and consistently seek to lead this nation forward. A people who are the conscience of America and stand as a beacon of the great possibility of our democracy. To know the history of Black people in America is to understand our history is a testament to the enduring pursuit of America’s ideals.” — Tanisha Sullivan, Chair of the Governor’s Continued on page 17

COMMENTARY

The views and opinions expressed in the commentaries and letters to the Editor of The Somerville Times do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of The Somerville Times, its publishers or staff.

Taking Davis Square Higher?



By Denise Provost

People all over town are talking about the 25-story building proposed for Davis Square. The most asked question seems to be, are you for it, or against it? But it seems to me that this question is premature.

We probably all have first reactions to the concept of a 500-apartment high-rise. But whatever these initial feelings, it will help to have more detailed information.

Here are some of the questions I've asked myself:

How big is a 25-story building?

Really big, as it turns out. Crane-your-neck big.

Look, for instance, at Somerville's Clarendon Hill Towers

(Broadway at Alewife Brook Parkway). Each of the three residential buildings in that complex is 12 stories tall. Stack two of them, you'll get 24 floors.

That's basically the same height as the 25-story building proposed for Davis Square. A building of that size qualifies as a high-rise, a category of structures from 12 to 39 floors.

Are there other buildings of this size in Somerville?

Nearby residential buildings of this size include:

- Somerville's tallest building, the "Prospect Union Square." It's visible from quite a distance. 314 of its 450 apartments are in its 25-story tower, 136 more in an adjacent midrise building.
- The highest building at Assembly Square is the 24-story "Miscela at Assembly Row." As with the Union Square complex, not all its 500 units are in the tower.
- In Cambridge, the residential "Proto Kendall Square" building has 500 units in 22 stories.

How did these high-rise buildings get built?

Looking at these new high-rise buildings, one wonders – how did their developers find the land to build them on? Big lots are hard to find in urban areas. Large projects typically need vacant land - which often has to be made vacant through demolition.

As it happens, all three high-rises mentioned above stand on land taken by eminent domain through the urban renewal process.

"Prospect Union Square" sits on two former junkyards - Kiley Barrel, and A-1 Plumbing (memorable for its display of used radiators). This land became available for development through the Union Square Urban Renewal Plan. The redevelopment of Assembly Square and Kendall Square also came about through the urban renewal process.

I'm not suggesting that Davis Square is likely to become an urban renewal area. That process starts with a declaration that an

area is "blighted." It just happens that urban land for large developments is often acquired this way.

What else is there to consider about this proposal?

The height and bulk of the 25-story high-rise proposed for Davis Square raises more questions, such as:

- What is the size and shape of the building's footprint? We ought to have the chance to see this land area outlined in bright marker on a map of Davis Square, if not spray painted in the square itself.
- How big are the cranes that will be needed to construct a 25-story building? Where will they be located, and for how long?
- Will the developer want to construct lower rise buildings next to it, as some other such projects have been designed?
- Will the developer want to acquire adjacent land in the square as part of this project?
- Don't we need to visualize how a large-scale tower will fit into small-scale Davis Square?

Wikipedia describes Davis Square not as a business district but as a "major intersection." Can the developer show us photos or videos of comparable towers fitting into small business districts in other MA cities?

The public meeting about the proposed "Copper Mill" development will take place on Wednesday, February 12, at 6 p.m. at the Somerville Community Baptist Church, 31 College Ave. I'm sure that other questions will come up at the meeting.

(Note: all the information in this piece comes from publicly available sources, mainly developer/owners/marketers, municipalities, and other permitting authorities.)

Attorney Denise Provost joined the City of Somerville's Law Department in 1984, and entered private practice in 1990. She served as Alderman at Large from 2000 to 2006, and as State Representative for Somerville's 27th Middlesex District from 2006 to 2021.

Beacon Hill Roll callCONT. FROM PG 16

Black Empowerment Advisory Council.

"This bill is vital because it addresses the pressing issue of allowing male athletes to compete in girls' school sports when there is no equivalent boys' team or when a boy identifies as a girl. [The bill] would give athletes and coaches the legal right to opt out of competitions against the opposite sex without fear of discipline." — *Statement by the Massachusetts Family Institute (MFI).*

"It sickens me to see that any legislator in Massachusetts would partner with this organization to incite fearmongering and disinformation at the expense of children." — *Tanya Neslusan, Executive Director of Mass Equality on what it calls MFI's activities to promote discriminatory bills impacting transgender youth and anti-LGBTQ policies at the state and local level by engaging in disinformation campaigns and encouraging hateful propaganda against the LGBTQ communities across the state.*

"I think after witnessing last year's coin toss, and to my knowledge – and please correct me if I'm wrong – there

was no problem with betting integrity that took place. I looked in all the jurisdictions and I Googled as many news articles as I could to see if any betting integrity [issues] took place. There are other prop bets, like the Gatorade color over the coach, the national anthem length, and we, of course, decided we didn't want to go that far. But I think the coin toss is something we should be revisiting." — *Massachusetts Gaming Commissioner Brad Hill on the commission's 3-2 vote to allow sports betting companies in the Bay State to offer wagers on the Super Bowl opening coin toss.*

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 legislators 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, research, constituent work and other matters that are important 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 legislation 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 Feb. 3-7, the House met for a total of six hours and 13 minutes while the Senate met for a total of 11 minutes.

Mon Feb. 3	House 11:02 a.m. to 11:10 a.m. Senate 11:20 a.m. to 11:26 a.m.
Tues. Feb. 4	No House session No Senate session
Wed. Feb. 5	No House session No Senate session
Thurs. Feb. 6	House 1:01 a.m. to 5:06 p.m. Senate 11:28 a.m. to 11:33 a.m.
Fri. Feb. 7	No House session No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS:

Medical Equipment Program – Through the generosity of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and from the direction of Mayor Bal-lantyne, the Council on Aging can provide Durable Medical Equipment at no cost to Somerville residents. Residents with a documented need for medical equipment must be over the age of 60, or have a permanent disability, and must be otherwise unable to afford or access needed medical equipment. We currently have available: Commodes, Bath Benches, Rollator Walkers, Incontinence Supplies and Transport Wheelchairs (wheelchairs are intended for transport and are not self-propelling or self-breaking.) For additional information, or for an application, please contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

Lockboxes for Seniors – What is the Lockboxes for Seniors program? The Lockboxes for Seniors program is intended to provide Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) access to your residence in the event of an emergency where you are unable to open the door. A key to your residence will be stored in a secure metal storage device, like a realtor's lockbox, at your residence. The access code to the lockbox will only be available to Police, Fire, or EMS personnel and used only during an emergency. Who is eligible? The program is targeted towards Somerville community members who live alone and are aged 65+, or those who are disabled and/or suffer from major medical illness at any age. Individuals living in apartment complexes or other facilities with maintenance staff are not eligible for this program. How do I know this is safe? A member of the Somerville Fire Department will install and demonstrate how the lockbox operates and answer any questions you may have. The four-digit combination on the lockbox will only be available to respond to emergency personnel in the event of an emergency. Who should I contact for more information? For more information, please contact Debby Higgins at the Council on Aging via email at dhiggins@somervillema.gov or by telephone at (617) 625-6600 ext. 2321. There is no charge to participate in the program if you meet the established target criteria. The Council on Aging will verify eligibility for services. This program is designed for those who are at most significant risk for falls or have limited mobility. All participants will be required to provide a spare house key to be used in the lock box as well as a safety inspection of the property.

Technology Workshops – The Council on Aging continues to strive to close the technology gap by partnering with Somerville Cambridge Elder Services to bring technology workshops to the COA. Each Monday ses-

sion will focus on different topics related to internet use and safety.

Cultural Series Event – featuring Comedian David Shikes. Tuesday, February 18th 11:00 a.m. at the Dilboy Post located at 351 Summer Street. \$5 per person. Lunch will be served at noon (ham, mac & cheese, vegetable and salad) - the cost of lunch is subsidized by the City of Somerville. Reserve your spot for the event and lunch by calling Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

Valentines Day Luncheon – Thursday, February 13th starting at 11:00 a.m. at the George Dilboy Post located at 351 Summer Street. \$10 per person. Join us for an afternoon of music and a special meal (chicken parmigiana, pasta & salad.) Reserve your spot for the event and lunch by calling Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

On the Road with Social Services – Our Social Services Team is heading to Capen Court on Thursday, February 13th from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. If you live at Capen Court, be sure to stop by with questions around food stamps, health insurance or other social benefits you may have or may be interested in learning about.

FDIC Money Smart – Friday, February 14th starting at 11:00 a.m., representatives from Northern Bank will conduct a presentation on financial exploitation. This presentation will focus on computer and internet-based scams and how best to avoid them. RSVP by calling Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 or email Natasha at nnaim@somervillema.gov.

Art Therapy – Monday, February 24th at 1:00 p.m. at our Holland Street Center. Join Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Registered Art Therapist, Erica Curcio for a relaxing and crafty afternoon! Learn how to paint flowers that you will cut and collage on a homemade card. RSVP to Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318 or email Molly at mpagliuca@somervillema.gov

Learn to Manage Chronic Diabetes in a Free Virtual Class – The class begins on Tuesday, February 11th and continues for six weeks, meeting on Tuesdays from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. This is a camera-on, interactive workshop that will take place over Zoom. Registration is required by Friday, February 7th. Participants will need to pick up a book from Somerville Cambridge Elder Services at 61 Medford Street by Monday, February 10th. For more information or to register please call Meghan Ostrander at 617-628-2601, ext. 3172 or email Meghan at meghan.ostrander@eldercare.org. Please contact SCES as soon as possible if you need special assistance to obtain the book.

Movie Day – Friday, February 14th starting at

10:30 a.m. at our Holland Street Center. This months movie is Barbie starring Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling. The running time is 1 hour 54 minutes. RSVP by calling Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov - \$2.00 Pizza Lunch served after the movie.

Knitting Group – Tuesday, February 18th & 25th from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at our Holland Street Center located at 167 Holland Street. Please RSVP to Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 or email Natasha at nnaim@somervillema.gov

Coffee & Conversation Groups – Every Monday in February except for the 17th from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at our Ralph & Jenny Center located at 9 New Washington Street. And Every Thursday in January at the Holland Street Center from 10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Join us for this staff-led discussion group which covers a range of topics thought up by participants. This is a friendly group, where all topics are discussed respectfully. RSVP to Maureen Bastardi at 617-625-6600, ext. 2335 or email Maureen at mbastardi@somervillema.gov.

Looking for a location to chat with your friends? Come to the COA on Thursday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., the senior center is open, and the coffee is on as we wait for the start of Bingo.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Stay connected via our Facebook page - Informative, entertaining, lots of photos and updates. Visit our page at <https://www.facebook.com/SomervilleCOA/>

Follow the Somerville Council on Aging on Instagram! You can find us under the Instagram handle: somervillecouncilonaging If you have any questions or need help following us, contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or email her at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

If you would like to receive a virtual copy of our monthly newsletter, please contact Maureen Bastardi at 617-625-6600, ext. 2335 or email Maureen Bastardi at mbastardi@somervillema.gov.

If you would like to receive a copy of our monthly newsletter in the mail, please contact Connie Lorneti at 617-625-6600, ext. 2319 or email Connie at clorenti@somervillema.gov.

If you would like to become part of our Google Group, please contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov

GovTV – Xfinity 22/Astound 13/613

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12		12:30 AM	Senior Circuit: Virtual Reality	6:30 PM	Construction Advisory Group Meeting	Superintendent Dr. Carmona	
7:00 AM	COA: General Seated Exercise #2	1:00 AM	2025 Midterm Ceremonies	#3 1-29-25	12:00 PM	City Council Meeting 2-13-25	
7:30 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol		& Mayoral Address	9:00 PM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	4:00 PM	Museum of Bad Art Tour
8:00 AM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	7:00 AM	Construction Advisory Group	9:35 PM	Community Meeting: Public Safety	5:00 PM	Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting
8:35 AM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans		Meeting #3 1-29-25	11:00 PM	Talking Business: Night Life	#5 12-16-24	
9:05 AM	Community Meeting: Public Safety	9:30 AM	City Council Spotlight: Lance Davis	11:30 PM	Senior Circuit: Virtual Reality	7:00 PM	Finance Committee Meeting 2-11-25
10:30 AM	SomerViva em Português	10:00 AM	COA: General Seated Exercise	SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16			
11:00 AM	School Committee Update: Superintendent Dr. Carmona	10:30 AM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans	12:00 AM	City Council Meeting 2-13-25	10:00 PM	Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner
11:30 AM	SomerViva em Português	11:00 AM	Chamber of Commerce Awards	7:00 AM	COA: General Seated Exercise #2	11:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: Lance Davis
12:00 PM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans		Dinner 2024	7:30 AM	SomerViva em Português	TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18	
12:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: Lance Davis	12:30 PM	Community Meeting: Public Safety	8:00 AM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans	12:00 AM	Construction Advisory Group Meeting
1:00 PM	2025 Midterm Ceremonies	2:00 PM	2025 Midterm Ceremonies	8:30 AM	City Council Spotlight: Lance Davis	#3 1-29-25	
	& Mayoral Address		& Mayoral Address	9:00 AM	Senior Circuit: Virtual Reality	2:30 AM	SomerViva em Português
2:30 PM	MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion	3:30 PM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans	9:30 AM	MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion	7:00 AM	COA: General Seated Exercise #2
4:00 PM	Finance Committee Meeting 1-21-25	4:00 PM	Community Mtg on Davis Sq Area	11:00 AM	Central Ave. Public Meeting #4	7:30 AM	Yoga with Jenn Falk - Practice I
7:00 PM	Community Meeting: Public Safety		Public Safety 10-9-24	12:00 PM	Senior Circuit: Virtual Reality	8:05 AM	Community Meeting: Public Safety
8:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: Lance Davis	6:00 PM	Finance Committee Meeting 2-11-25	12:30 PM	Finance Committee Meeting 2-11-25	9:30 AM	School Committee Update: Superintendent Dr. Carmona
9:00 PM	Finance Committee Meeting 1-21-25	8:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: Lance Davis	3:00 PM	MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion	10:00 AM	MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13		9:00 PM	SomerViva em Português	4:30 PM	SomerViva an Kreyol	11:30 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol
12:00 AM	Museum of Bad Art Tour	9:30 PM	Community Meeting: Public Safety	5:00 PM	Community Meeting: Public Safety	12:00 PM	Senior Circuit: Virtual Reality
1:00 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol	11:00 PM	Museum of Bad Art Tour	6:30 PM	School Committee Update: Superintendent Dr. Carmona	12:30 PM	Finance Committee Meeting 2-11-25
1:30 AM	Central Somerville Ave. Public Meeting #5 12-16-24	SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15		7:00 PM	Senior Circuit: Virtual Reality	3:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: Lance Davis
7:00 AM	Chair Yoga w/ Janine Duffy	12:00 AM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo	7:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: Lance Davis	4:00 PM	School Committee Update: Superintendent Dr. Carmona
7:30 AM	COA: General Seated Exercise #2	12:35 AM	Finance Committee Meeting 2-11-25	8:00 PM	City Council Meeting 2-13-25		
8:00 AM	MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion	7:00 AM	Yoga with Jenn Falk - Practice IV	MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17		4:30 PM	School Committee Meeting 2-3-25
9:30 AM	Senior Circuit: Virtual Reality	8:00 AM	Construction Advisory Group Meeting	12:00 AM	Senior Circuit: Virtual Reality	8:00 PM	City Council Spotlight: Kristen Strezo
10:00 AM	Community Meeting: Public Safety		#3 1-29-25	12:30 AM	Community Meeting: Public Safety	8:35 PM	Construction Advisory Group Meeting
11:30 AM	SomerViva an Kreyol	10:30 AM	Talking Business: Night Life	2:00 AM	School Committee Update: Superintendent Dr. Carmona	#3 1-29-25	
12:00 PM	Senior Circuit: Virtual Reality	11:00 AM	Senior Circuit: Virtual Reality	7:00 AM	2025 Midterm Ceremonies	11:00 PM	SomerViva em Português
12:30 PM	Construction Advisory Group Meeting #3 1-29-25	11:30 AM	City Council Spotlight: Lance Davis		& Mayoral Address	11:30 PM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans
3:00 PM	SomerViva em Português	12:00 PM	School Committee Meeting 2-3-25	8:30 AM	School Committee Update: Superintendent Dr. Carmona	WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19	
3:30 PM	City Council Spotlight: Lance Davis	3:30 PM	SomerViva em Português	9:00 AM	Construction Advisory Group Meeting	12:00 AM	Senior Circuit: Virtual Reality
7:00 PM	City Council Meeting - LIVE	4:00 PM	2025 Midterm Ceremonies		#3 1-29-25	12:30 AM	City Council Spotlight: Lance Davis
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14			& Mayoral Address	11:30 AM	School Committee Update:	1:00 AM	MLK Celebration & Panel Discussion
		5:30 PM	Mental Health Matters: Veterans				
		6:00 PM	School Committee Update: Superintendent Dr. Carmona				

EdTV - Xfinity 15/Astound 15/ 614

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12		- Tufts Classic		7:00 PM	SHS Varsity Swim vs Medford	4:00 PM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren
8:00 AM	School Committee Meeting 2-3-25	FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14		8:00 PM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Medford	5:00 PM	SHS Chorus: An Evening of Song
11:14 AM	WSNS 2025 Winter Concert	12:00 AM	SHS Varsity Swim vs Medford		- Tufts Classic	7:00 PM	WSNS 2025 Winter Concert
12:02 PM	SHS Hockey vs Keefe Tech	1:00 AM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Cambridge	9:30 PM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Medford	8:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs Keefe Tech
1:35 PM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren	8:00 AM	WSNS 2025 Winter Concert	11:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs Keefe Tech	10:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs Lynn
2:30 PM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Cambridge	9:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs Haverhill	SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16			
4:00 PM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Medford	11:00 AM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Latin Academy	12:30 AM	WSNS 2025 Winter Concert	TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18	
5:30 PM	SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight	12:30 PM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren	1:30 AM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Framingham	12:30 AM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Cambridge
6:00 PM	SHS Chorus: An Evening of Song	1:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs Keefe Tech	8:00 AM	WSNS 2025 Winter Concert	2:00 AM	SHS Varsity Swim vs Medford
8:00 PM	SHS Varsity Swim vs Medford	3:00 PM	SHS Chorus: An Evening of Song	9:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs Haverhill	3:00 AM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren
9:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs Keefe Tech	4:30 PM	Brown School 2025 Winter Concert	11:00 AM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Cambridge	8:00 AM	SHS Chorus: An Evening of Song
10:33 PM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren	5:30 PM	SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight	12:30 PM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren	9:30 AM	SHS Hockey vs Methuen
11:27 PM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Cambridge	6:00 PM	WSNS 2025 Winter Concert	1:30 PM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Latin Academy	11:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs Keefe Tech
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13		7:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs Haverhill	3:00 PM	SHS Chorus: An Evening of Song	12:30 PM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Framingham
12:57 AM	SHS Chorus: An Evening of Song	9:00 PM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Latin Academy	4:30 PM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Framingham	2:00 PM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Latin Academy
2:30 AM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Medford	10:30 PM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren	7:00 PM	SHS Varsity Swim vs Medford	3:30 PM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren
8:00 AM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford - Tufts Classic	11:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs Keefe Tech	8:00 PM	WSNS 2025 Winter Concert	4:30 PM	SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
10:00 AM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Medford - Tufts Classic	SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15		9:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs Haverhill	5:00 PM	SHS Varsity Swim vs Medford
11:30 AM	Brown School 2025 Winter Concert	1:00 AM	SHS Chorus: An Evening of Song	11:00 PM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Cambridge	6:00 PM	SHS Chorus: An Evening of Song
12:30 PM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Cambridge	2:30 AM	Brown School 2025 Winter Concert	MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17			
2:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs Lynn	8:00 AM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren	12:15 AM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren	7:30 PM	SHS Hockey vs Methuen
4:00 PM	SHS Chorus: An Evening of Song	9:00 AM	SHS Varsity Swim vs Medford	1:00 AM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Latin Academy	9:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs Keefe Tech
5:30 PM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Latin Academy	10:00 AM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Medford - Tufts Classic	3:00 AM	SHS Chorus: An Evening of Song	10:30 PM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Framingham
7:00 PM	SHS Varsity Swim vs Medford	11:30 AM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Medford	8:00 AM	WSNS 2025 Winter Concert	WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19	
8:00 PM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Medford - Tufts Classic	1:00 PM	SHS Hockey vs Keefe Tech	9:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs Keefe Tech	12:00 AM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Latin Academy
10:00 PM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Medford	2:30 PM	WSNS 2025 Winter Concert	11:00 AM	SHS Hockey vs Lynn	1:30 AM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren
		3:30 PM	SHS Boys' Basketball vs Framingham	12:33 PM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren	2:30 AM	SHS Ring of Honor - Jerry Knight
		6:00 PM	SHS Jazz Band Live at the Burren	1:30 PM	SHS Girls' Basketball vs Cambridge	3:00 AM	SHS Varsity Swim vs Medford
				3:00 PM	SHS Varsity Swim vs Medford		



Somerville Fair Housing Commission
Question of the week

Q: My landlord wants access to my apartment. Is this allowed?

A: Yes, the landlord is allowed “reasonable access” to your apartment, which usually means that they must give you 24 hours notice to determine a convenient time for both parties. You must comply if they have a reason such as inspections, repairs, or showing the unit to prospective tenants or buyers. In addition, if there is an emergency, the landlord is allowed access.


The Somerville Fair Housing Commission generally meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 3 p.m. online. Call 617-625-6600 ext. 2578 for the login information.



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By Bobbygeorge Potaris

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Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Snow garden...
— Photo by Denise Provost

On This Day in History

February 12

1294 – Kublai Khan, the conqueror of Asia, dies at the age of 80.

1793 – The first fugitive slave law, requiring the return of escaped slaves, is passed.

1836 – Mexican General Santa Anna crosses the Rio Grande en route to the Alamo.

1909 – The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is formed.

1912 – China becomes a republic following the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty.

1924 – George Gershwin's groundbreaking symphonic jazz composition Rhapsody in Blue premieres with Gershwin himself playing the piano

1931 – Japan makes its first television broadcast—a baseball game.

1972 – Senator Edward Kennedy advocates amnesty for Vietnam draft resisters.

1974 – The Symbionese Liberation Army asks the Hearst family for \$230 million in food for the poor.

1999 – The U.S. Senate fails to pass two articles of impeachment against President Bill Clinton.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

apply by February 18. Learn more and apply here <https://www.somervillema.gov/news/join-somerville-condominium-review-board>.

The **Somerville Warming Center** is looking for donations for their clients. To see what is needed visit their facebook page or their Amazon wish list under Somerville Warming Center.

Winter can stretch budgets to the breaking point. With increased costs for food, heating, housing, and transportation, many Massachusetts families are facing tough choices. If you or your family need help accessing food, don't wait – call **Project Bread's toll-free FoodSource Hotline** today at 1-800-645-8333.

All Somerville residents should be on the lookout for the **2025 annual City of Somerville census** in their mailbox. The 2025 census form also includes an application to vote by mail in Somerville's preliminary and city elections this year. High census participation provides an accurate population count, which helps the city plan municipal services, apply for grants, and adapt as the population changes. The **Elections Department** also uses the census to help keep voting rolls up to date. It's easy to take part in the census. Just fill out the short form, be sure to sign and date the form, and then return it one of three ways: mail it back in the provided postage-paid return envelope, scan the form and email is to census@somervillema.gov, or drop it off in person at **City Hall** (93 Highland Ave.). Contact 311 (617-666-3311) with any questions.

Made In Massachusetts, a 3+ hour chronological journey through over 100 years of filmmaking in Massachusetts will screen on **Sunday, March 9**, at 1:00pm at the **Somerville Theatre** in Davis Square, Somerville. *MIM* features clips from over 200 movies and television shows shot in the state starting with films from the silent era and going all the way through 2024. Highlighting cities and towns from Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville to Concord, Martha's Vineyard, Great Barrington, and everywhere in-between. Featuring stars from James Cagney, Elizabeth Taylor, Steve McQueen, and Paul Newman to Harrison Ford, Sandra Bullock, Ryan Reynolds, Kerry Washington, and all the Afflecks and Wahlbergs you can handle. Admission is free, with donations

gladly accepted to support the **Independent Film Festival Boston (IFFBoston)**. Q&A with filmmakers **Adam Roffman** and **Vatche Arabian** to follow.

Important tips for **staying safe and warm** in the current cold weather: Dress in layers and cover as much exposed skin as possible when outdoors. Minimize time outside, including for pets. Check in on family and neighbors. Follow all safety precautions if using space heaters. Do not use a stove or oven as a heat source. Check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and make sure they are working and have fresh batteries. Learn more about carbon monoxide safety: mass.gov/info-details/carbon-monoxide-co-safety. Prevent frozen water pipes: somervillema.gov/frozenpipes. For more, visit: somervillema.gov/coldweather.

The **Somerville Public Library** is starting a **Seed Library** at all three locations. They are offering the next **"Seed Packing Parties"** that they wanted to share: **Saturday, February 15**, 2-4 p.m. at the **Central Branch**. Hang with your fellow community members and help repack-age native, herb, and vegetables seeds into take-home size packets as part of this new initiative. <https://www.facebook.com/share/1EHpC2k1zB/>.

Join the **Growing Center** for the **Maple Boil Down** and experience the process of boiling sap into maple syrup. Learn the process from the tapping of maple trees at **Tufts University** to the making of maple syrup. Connect with other folks in the community. Get into the spirit and order your t-shirt ahead of time at bit.ly/fcgc-store. This event is free and open to all. **Saturday, March 1**, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., Somerville Community Growing Center, 22 Vinal Ave, Somerville. Rain Date Saturday, March 8.

The **SHS Athletics Department** honored **Jerry Knight** as the first inductee to the **Somerville High School Athletics Ring of Honor**. He was chosen for his amazing contributions to the Somerville High School athletic community. Watch the video here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pk7OTv7Es>.

Abstract painter and **Brickbottom Artists' Building** founding member **Diane Novetsky** has assembled a cohort of three inventive painters for a new exhib-

it of current abstraction at **Brickbottom Gallery, running through February 28. Brickbottom Artists Association**, 1 Fitchburg St., Somerville, MA. <https://brickbottom.org/>.

The **Somerville High Trivia Team** is competing on **GBH's High School Quiz Show** this year. Congratulations **Ella, Calla, Jack, Sam, Nate, Oliver, Coach (and SHS History Teacher) Theodore Blake** and the rest of the SHS Team. Only the top 17 trivia teams in the state qualified for the annual tournament. Somerville's first match will air on GBH and Youtube on **February 22**.

LEGO® Brick's 67th Birthday and **LEGO Discovery Center Boston** is celebrating by launching a brand-new event called **LEGO Creativity Academy through March 3**. Event URL and tickets: <https://www.legodiscoverycenter.com/boston/whats-inside/events/creativity-academy/>.

Are you looking for a way to get involved? The **City of Somerville** needs **board and commission members**. Learn more and apply for current openings by visiting somervillema.gov/besomerville.

The **Somerville Homeless Coalition** invites you to join them for a special celebration on **Thursday, March 27**, at 6 p.m., **Crystal Ballroom**, 55 Davis Sq, as they commemorate 40 years of service to the Somerville and Greater Boston community. Enjoy specialty cocktails, delicious delights from local favorites **Redbones** and **Dave's Fresh Pasta**, and vibrant live music to sway to by **West of Willows** and **The Loomers**. <https://somervillehomelesscoalition.org/events/>.

SCES is teaming up with **City Fresh Foods** to offer a **five-pack of frozen home delivered meals**. This new meal delivery option is ideal for consumers who want the convenience of home delivered meals but are not able to be at home each week-day to receive deliveries. Meal recipients can choose which weekday they would like to receive the frozen meals, with up to five meals in each bulk delivery. Each meal comes with bread, milk, and a desert. Current SCES clients who are interested in receiving meals should call their office at 617-628-2601 or contact their case manager for more information.

COA's Valentine's Day Luncheon, Thursday, February 13, starting at 11 a.m. at the **George Dilboy Post** located at 351 Summer Street. \$10 per person. Join in for an afternoon of music and a special meal (chicken parmigiana, pasta and salad.) Reserve your spot for the event and lunch by calling **Debby Higgins** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

Low-income households may be eligible to receive help with winter heating costs through the **Fuel Assistance Program**. This program is part of the **Home Energy Assistance program (HEAP)** and serves residents of Somerville and Cambridge. Participants receive assistance with their heating costs **between November 1 and April 30**. Learn more about the program, check if you qualify, and apply for assistance today at somerville-ma.gov/heatingassistance.

Somerville High School students are invited to bring their SHS ID to the **Somerville YMCA on Fridays** from 7 to 9 p.m. and **Sundays** from 2 to 4 p.m. for free. There are free movie nights. On Sundays, students will have access to the basketball and exercise areas (including the weight room). Visit their website to learn more. <https://somervilleymca.org/news/somerville-teens-after-hours/>. Somerville YMCA asks that students go to their website to register before visiting and this program is for ages 14 to 17 years.

City Alerts are a great way for those who live, work, or own a business in Somerville to receive important city information that affects your neighborhood. City Alerts provide information about emergencies (including snow emergencies), construction and road closures, water service interruptions, community news, and more. To sign up, visit somervillema.gov/alerts and click on the button for your preferred language. Step-by-step sign-up instructions are available at: somervillema.gov/alerts. Having trouble signing up? You can call 3-1-1 (617-666-3311) for assistance.

With the days growing shorter and temperatures dipping colder, the **Somerville Homeless Coalition** is in critical need of new or lightly used jackets for their clients currently living outside. If you have any adult sized coats hanging in your closet that you don't wear, please consider dropping them off at the



OFF THE SHELF
by Doug Holder

Lyrical
SOMERVILLE
edited by Doug Holder

Dennis Daly was born in Salem Massachusetts. He graduated from Boston College with a B.S. degree and earned an M.A. degree in English Literature at Northeastern University. He has twice visited Thomas Merton's hermitage on the grounds of the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky. Daly has published eleven books of poetry and poetic translations. Please visit his blog here: denisfdaly.blogspot.com.



Lines Written for Thomas Merton

Joining a community of silence
Does not a hermit make. Perish the thought.
They built him a hermitage for penance
Or pain. His blocks of solitude hardbought.

Much more than muteness or dental drill,
He saw Paradise in tangible ways,
Until 4th and Walnut in Louisville,
Where humanity shines when Merton prays.

Friendship by letter came naturally—
Pasternak, Pope John, and Dorothy Day.
His brother's wartime death certainly key.
His poetry once said, would not unsay.

Over monastic wall the prodigal
Escaped for liquor and a pack of smokes.
His conversation turned to conjugal,
Outraging an abbot and other folks.

Religion's next future he spoke about.
They found him under an electric fan.
No autopsy needed. There was some doubt:
Heart attack or CIA bogeyman.

— Dennis Daly

To have your work considered for the Lyrical send it to:
Doug Holder, 25 School St., Somerville, MA 02143. dougholder@post.harvard.edu

'In the Absence of Birds'
by Ruth C. Chad

In the Absence of Birds
Cervena Barva Press, 2024
by Ruth C. Chad

Review by Off The Shelf correspondent Lee Varon

In this exquisite collection, poet Ruth Chad interweaves her keen attention to the details of our natural world with deep emotions of love, loss, joy, and grief. Many of the poems in this collection (divided into three sections) focus on the poet's mother who suffered from Alzheimer's before she succumbed to the disease in her 90s. These poems read like journal entries with often just dates for titles

I imagine witnessing a loved one fall into the depths of dementia must be heart-wrenching as one sees the person becoming unmoored from their former life. Chad captures this brilliantly in such poems as *April 24*:

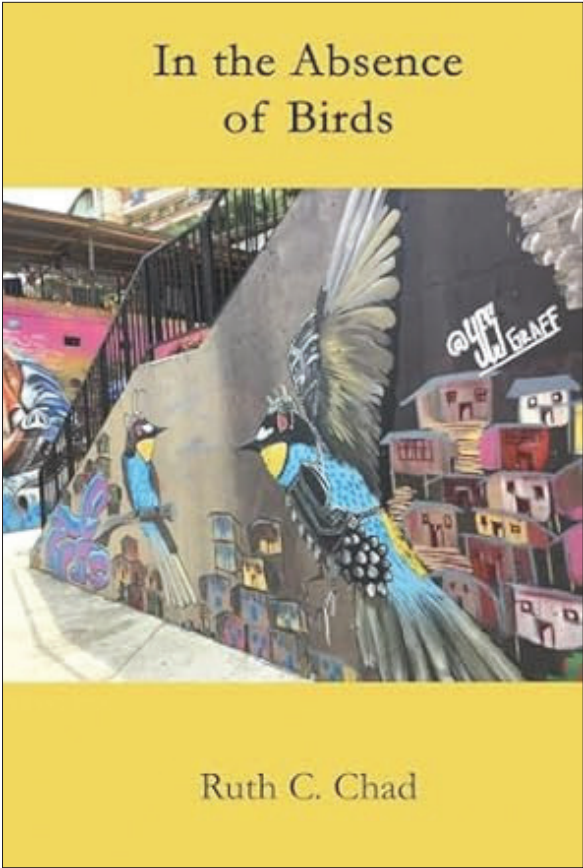
Last night I dreamt of mermaids
in the surf
on the white
wild mane of the waves
and floating mussels
with no flesh
no byssus attached

Byssus refers to the protein threads that attach mollusks, such as mussels, to solid surfaces. What a perfect image of her mother, a shell of her former self, totally unable to attach to anything in the world around her.

Chad is not afraid to plumb the complexities of the mother/daughter relationship. In *If Only*, she laments the strictures of her mother's life.

...Long after her death
I will wish
that my mother had been freed
of the yellow walls
of our split level
that she could have walked
calmly away
from the turquoise kitchen
apron trailing behind her in the grass
that she could have walked
calmly away
into the moonrise
and left a path
for me

Chad's poems are a testament of how we go on, how we manage devastating things and come to



terms with them. One thing poetry can do so well is help us survive difficult times and certainly Chad's poems provide this solace. Through her poetry, she illustrates how it feels to see a loved one slip into illness and infirmity, but she also shows us how one takes in the fullness of another's life and, in so doing, transmutes this loss into a triumph of the spirit.

These poems are artfully crafted with deceptive simplicity. Often, Chad dispenses with punctuation altogether and the beauty of her words on the page shines forth with its power and resonance. Most of these poems are no longer than a page and among these the poet intersperses haiku and other short poems which serve to crystallize her message as in this poem after her mother's passing:

February 14
I cried when I dropped the teacup
robin's egg blue
shattered shards of china
on my kitchen floor
it was yours

No extra words slow the conveyance of the deep emotion in such poems.

There are poems in this collection about travel, the process of aging, and about other family members. All of these are imbued with Chad's keen attention to the natural world and breathtaking images as in lines from *Life in the Pandemic*: Continued on page 23

Mayor Ballantyne joins New England Donor Services, RMV and Heart Recipients to celebrate Valentine’s Day and encourage people to get The Heart by registering as an organ donor when getting one’s license

On Friday, February 14th at 10:30 AM ET, state and local officials and New England Donor Services (NEDS) will join with local donor recipients and families at Somerville City Hall to honor the incredible gift of life on National Donor Day. As part of the organization’s “Have a Heart and get a Heart” campaign, which takes place during National Heart Month and Valentine’s Day, the event will feature local heart transplant recipient, Kenny Laferriere. Kenny received his heart transplant in 2001 after the left ventricle of his heart was damaged when he had cancer as a child.

Since receiving the gift of life, Kenny married his wife, Kim, and together they are now proud parents of two boys. To “pay it forward” and to help others, he is incredibly proud to work as a Hospital Donation Strategist at NEDS. Also there to share her story will be Susan Flint, mother of Lucas Flint who was killed by a drunk driver when he was only 21. He saved five lives through organ donation, one of them being Lucas’ heart recipient, who Susan has connected with in recent years.

The event will commemorate those who have given the gift of life, their families, and those still waiting for life-saving transplants, and encourage their constituents to register as organ donors. The event comes as NEDS has achieved a record number of life-saving deceased donor organ donations and transplants in its New England service area for four consecutive years. In 2024, 648 deceased donors donated organs resulting in 1,570 life-saving transplants.

This record level of clinical activity places NEDS among the nation’s top three organ procurement organizations by donor volume. Since 2020, NEDS has increased the annual number of organ donors by 80 percent.

The event will include: Mayor Katjana Ballantyne Kenny Laferriere, Heart Transplant Recipient • Susan Flint, Donor Mother & NEDS Volunteer • MA Registry of Motor Vehicle Leadership • Matt Boger, Director of Government Relations, New England Donor Services (NEDS)

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 21

Somerville Homeless Coalition admin office located at **255 Elm Street, Suite 204**, during the hours listed below. Drop Off Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., 2 – 5 p.m. Each coat donated provides warmth, dignity, and safety for our neighbors having to face the harsh New England winter conditions.

On **Presidents’ Day, February 17**: City buildings are closed. **East Branch Library** (115 Broadway) will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you want to adopt-a-drain in Somerville, perform light maintenance as needed, and give it a creative name. Sign up for the **Adopt-a-Drain** program today by visiting Somerville.mysticdrains.org.

The **Somerville Winter Farmers Market** is back at the **Arts at the Armory**, 191 Highland Ave. on **Saturdays, 9:30**

a.m. – 1:30 p.m. **from November 2 to April 12**. The Center for the Arts at the Armory is proud to offer a weekly winter market with 71+ local food vendors with the best locally grown and regionally produced foods, including fresh produce, cheese, eggs, meats, fish, breads, tamales, pastries, chocolate, skincare products, and more. The market accepts SNAP/EBT and HIP benefits. They also offer a \$15 SNAP match to customers each week. More info available on their website: <https://www.somwintermarket.org/>.

Is **your teen** looking to **make some extra money**? The city’s **Snow Shoveling Program** is hiring youth to assist shoveling seniors and homeowners with disabilities out after snowstorms this winter. Teens and homeowners are paired for the season. After each storm, the homeowner will contact their assigned youth

to request shoveling services. Somerville teens ages 14 to 19 are welcome to apply. Looking for snow shoveling services? Apply online or contact **Debby Higgins** at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Snow emergency parking is on the even side of the street all winter, unless posted signage says differently. Sign up for alerts or update your information at somervillema.gov/alerts. You can call 311 if you need assistance. Flashing blue lights at major intersections indicate a snow emergency. Snow emergencies are announced on the city’s website, social media feeds, CityTV, and via information shared with local media. For more information on the city’s snow policies, visit somer-villema.gov/snow.

Through the generosity of the **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**, and from the direction of **Mayor Ballantyne**, the

Council on Aging can provide **Durable Medical Equipment** at no cost to Somerville residents. Residents with a documented need for medical equipment must be over the age of 60, or have a permanent disability, and must be otherwise unable to afford or access needed medical equipment. We currently have available: Commodes, Bath Benches, Rollator Walkers, Incontinence Supplies and Transport Wheelchairs (wheelchairs are intended for transport and are not self-propelling or self-breaking.) For additional information, or for an application, please contact **Debby Higgins** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

Don’t forget, if you would like to subscribe to receive a **digital edition** of our paper, go directly online to our website over to the right side and fill out your email address to receive a free, full PDF copy of the paper.

Off The Shelf CONT. FROM PG 22

A hundred sparrows
gather in the firs flutter
against each other
feathers bronze umber
their chatter
fills the lilac sky...

And in another poem, *Ice After a Storm*, the poet writes:

I shudder
in chill crusty morning
awed by the cold fist of sun
and how small I am
standing here
under the great loud beeches
like a girl in the circus crowd
the wild universe
whirling around me

Certainly, the poems in this enduring collection engender an equal sense of awe.

Lee Varon is a social worker and writer. Her latest poetry book is The Last Bed (2024). She has written two children’s books about substance use disorder: My Brother is Not a Monster: A Story of Addiction and Recovery (2021) and: A Kids Book About Overdose (2024).

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