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SOMERVILLE, MASS. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

Inside:



Going back home

page 3



Irish Soda Bread time

page 5



Robson Lemos in the kitchen

page 15

Mayor Joe Curtatone announces he will not run for re-election



Somerville Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone publicly announced that he will not be running for re-election during his midterm address on Monday.

By The Times Staff

On Monday, during his midterm address Mayor Joe Curtatone announced that he will not be running for re-election in November. The mayor has served Somerville in that office for nine terms, making him the city's longest serving mayor. It is not certain at this time what his future plans will be.

Curtatone served the City of Somerville as an Alderman for eight years prior to becoming mayor in 2004. As mayor, he has led the city through such challenging times as the 2007-2009 recession, the 2017 presidential executive order reducing grant funding to sanctuary cities, and most recently guiding policy safeguarding public health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his midterm address closing remarks, Curtatone stressed that being the mayor of Somerville has been an incredible experience, and singled out the efforts of city

Continued on page 4

The Chemistry of FiberLab: An Exploration of Textile Arts

An exhibition of textile art produced by a Somerville-based fiber arts collective comes to the Lexington Arts & Craft Society this spring, running from March 14 to April 4.

The Chemistry of FiberLab is curated by award-winning textile artist Jodi Colella, and features the artwork of students in her independent study group FiberLab. Begun in 2015, the group, under the tutelage of Colella, experiments with material and process while developing personal connections within a supportive community.

"I launched FiberLab to provide a place to expand knowledge, skills, and most importantly, creativity," says Colella. "Working with different mediums can be very expensive and precious, inhibiting the ability to relax and 'let it all go.'" When provided with access to materials and tools, there is freedom to play, be brave and allow our instincts to guide us. We started calling it FiberLab after a few sessions because it describes our inquisitively open

Continued on page 12



(Left) Picto 3 by Ellen Solari and (right) Gathering Strength by Rochelle Zohn are two of the works on display at the fiber arts exhibition Molly Harding Nye Gallery at the Lexington Arts & Crafts Society.

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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.

Mayor Curtatone announced on Monday during his midterm address that after 18 years of serving Somerville he **will not be running for re-election**. We thank him for his years of service to Somerville and wish him the best in the next chapter of his life, whatever that will be. Since his announcement the speculations have already started. Rumor has it that three current councilors are thinking of running: **Ben Ewen-Campen, J.T. Scott** and **Katjana Ballantyne**. Another rumor we heard is that there might be a surprise entry – long-time resident **Joe Lynch**. I guess we will know soon enough.

The **City of Somerville** still remains in the **limited Phase 3, Step 1 stage** of reopening that went into effect on February 1 until at least March 15. Capacity limits in Somerville businesses will remain at 25% or the limit set in the business’s city-approved health and safety plan until further notice. Somerville also continues to hold the limit on attendance at gatherings to no more than 10 persons until further notice. The limit applies to both indoor and outdoor gatherings of any kind unless otherwise specifically permitted in city activity-specific guidelines.








St. Patrick's Day is right around the corner and **Sally O'Brien's** will be celebrating its Irish heritage. Owner **Liam Mannion** and **Bob McWatters** invite the public to come by and enjoy a Guinness, corned beef and cabbage and Irish music on St Patrick's Day, **March 17**, at Sally O'Brien's, 335 Somerville Ave.

Happy birthday this week to the following: A big happy birthday to our own good guy and great Editor, **Jim Clark**. We wish him a great day, and we hope he enjoys his birthday and does something fun. Happy birthday to another one of our own, local real estate agent and lifelong resident **John Pratti**, from **C21 North East**. We hope John has a great birthday. Happy birthday to another nice guy, **Eddie Nuzzo**. We hope he has a great one. Happy birthday to **Nick Kondilis**, a long-time real estate agent with **Bremis Realty**. We hope

Continued on page 7

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of March 3 – March 9 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
 Wednesday <i>March 3</i>	Partly Cloudy	48°/30°	3%	2%	W 14 mph
 Thursday <i>March 4</i>	Sunny	38°/19°	2%	3%	NW 17 mph
 Friday <i>March 5</i>	Partly Cloudy	32°/21°	3%	3%	W 15 mph
 Saturday <i>March 6</i>	Sunny	33°/20°	0%	1%	WNW 13 mph
 Sunday <i>March 7</i>	Sunny	39°/23°	0%	0%	NW 7 mph
 Monday <i>March 8</i>	Sunny	46°/33°	0%	1%	WNW 10 mph
 Tuesday <i>March 9</i>	Sunny	56°/35°	3%	2%	W 11 mph

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

TheSomervilleTimes.com Comments of the Week

Response to: City Councilor pushes for police reform

Scoop says:

This Neidergang person has a loose nut! It is loser than his handle bars on his bicycle. Wonder if Cambridge or Medford citizens are aware of his plan. Can you imagine if the citizens of both cities find out about his proposal due to this stupidity of cutting down of our police force and having their tax dollars and their police force help Somerville! Yes, there is other resources to be taken care of, but the Counselors have found monies to do stupid things like bus/bike lanes, making one lane traffic in busy sections in some parts of the city, and take away precious parking for businesses, etc. Fund the Police!!!

Casimir H. Prohosky Jr. says:

This Scoop person is the very poster boy for why we need more funding for mental health programs and less of it for the over-dependency on police. Priorities, people. Fund better mental health!!!

Villenuous says:

I’m all for massive police reform, but someone’s got to show up when you call 911. Doesn’t have to be a police officer dependent on the situation, but it’s still got to be a highly trained person who’s getting paid a fair wage.

Response to: Somerville proposes immediate investments for street safety and mobility improvements

Sean Cryts says:

Great. Joe creates three more positions the tax payers in Somerville have to pay for to: “ traffic calming” = creating more traffic and get rid of parking spots! We need to vote him out!

Villenuous says:

Your taxes will be the same either way.
And, yes, get rid of more parking spaces, especially along main roads and in public squares. Devour them.
Also, if you’re in a car, you are the traffic.

Response to: Cars go up in smoke in Assembly Row garage

Jason says:

PD might want to look into the dude who did this same exact thing to cars over in the Partners garage early one morning in March 2019

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

The Somerville Times

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Life in the

VILLE

by Jimmy Del Ponte

You can go home



Somerville has a lot of Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964. Most of my friends are boomers. The parents of these babies, including mine, bought their houses for very cheap money, by today's standards.

For a number of reasons some sold in the '80's and '90's. A lot of houses stayed in the family. Some kept the house and made condos so they could stay in their homes. Usually when the last surviving parent passes away the children are faced with a decision, keep it or sell it.

These houses are now worth crazy money because so many want to move and live, and start businesses here.

A New High School, Red Line here, Green Line coming.

Many of these born and bred Somerville folks, went back to look at their former homes to see the old place. It opened up a thread on social media and we heard from some of the people who went back to the old neighborhood for a look at their beloved former homes, in their own words.

"I actually avoid driving by my childhood home on Summer Street. It genuinely saddens me. Words could never describe how much I miss living there. I think of that place every single day. I'll sit there for minutes on end each day dreaming about memories of the neighborhood, holidays and family. I have three true loves in my life. My wife, my daughter and my hometown. I just really struggle when it



comes to passing through, so I avoid it."

"It was an apartment building, but I'd be interested to see it. I've been by throughout the years, and my handprint and initials are still on the side of the building. Almost completely washed off, but still visible. Just a reminder of better times vs. what happened later."

"Dad had passed away, all members of the family had moved on. Keeping it in the family was not an option, the repairs to the house was beyond any of our families' budget could afford. The house was sold, but our memories of numerous family events were not for sale. The first buyer did nothing to improve the property. If anything, they added to a home completely in need of updating. Then we heard from friends in the neighborhood the house was being sold again. This time to a developer to build condos. As the project continued, those in the family who would drive by would say it looks so different. At an open house my husband, sister and me took a tour. It was not the house I grew up in, it was this ultra-modern, open concept, beautiful house. The kitchen was in the dining room, my old bedroom was the bathroom, the kitchen was a bedroom. So many changes that my emotions got the best of me and I started sobbing. So, so many memories would always be stamped in my heart."

Another friend says, "We can never go home again! It was good while it lasted. Only in our minds."

Part of what makes Somerville unique are the families that were lucky enough to hold onto the family home. Some of my friends I grew up with still live in their childhood home but the numbers are dwindling. One of my high school friends still visits her 95-year-old Italian mother every Sunday in the house she grew up in. Just think of all the family dinners, birthdays, and other fond memories are within those walls.

Somerville is growing in leaps and bounds. Baby Boomers who still live here are seeing so many changes. Former residents visit their old neighborhoods and have bittersweet memories. Some of those who are still here, and hung onto their homes for dear

Continued on page 9

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NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF ACTIVITY AND USE LIMITATION

Faulkner Brothers Inc.
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3-0004043

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. On February 23, 2021, SOMERVILLE M&M REALTY TRUST recorded with the Middlesex South County Registry of Deeds a TERMINATION of a NOTICE OF ACTIVITY AND USE LIMITATION on the disposal site, pursuant to 310 CMR 40.1080 through 40.1084. The NOTICE OF ACTIVITY AND USE LIMITATION was originally recorded and/or registered on July 27, 1999.

Any person interested in obtaining additional information about the NOTICE OF ACTIVITY AND USE LIMITATION may contact Glenn A. Carlson, Action Environmental Boston, 184 Riverview Avenue, Waltham MA 02453, (781) 893-9922.

The TERMINATED NOTICE OF ACTIVITY AND USE LIMITATION and the disposal site file can be viewed at MassDEP website using Release Tracking Number (RTN) 3-4043 at <http://public.dep.state.ma.us/SearchableSites2/Search.aspx> or at MassDEP, NORTHEAST REGION 205B Lowell Street Wilmington MA 01887, (978) 694-3200.

THE WEEK IN CRIME

By Jim Clark

He just wanted to keep fighting

Somerville Police officers were dispatched to a Powder House Blvd. location last Thursday on reports of a fight.

Upon arrival, the officers spoke with Manuel Marroquin-Orellana, who reportedly appeared to be very upset and speaking loudly, stating that he was ready to fight another man who was apparently in the vicinity.

While speaking to Marroquin-Orellana, officers noticed that he kept looking at the door beside him as if he was waiting for another person to come outside.

The other man exited the building through a rear door, but was still seen by Marroquin-Orellana, who then charged and began punching the man until they both ended up on the floor.

The officers intervened in an attempt to separate the men. They were able to pull the one man away from Marroquin-Orellana, who officers attempted to hold to the floor.

According to reports, Marroquin-Orellana kept trying to force himself away from the officers and yelled that he wanted to keep fighting.

Marroquin-Orellana was then placed in handcuffs and moved away from the other man. While separated, Marroquin-Orellana reportedly stated that he was going to kill the other man and that he would not care.

While Marroquin-Orellana was yelling at the other man, his family members were outside trying to calm him, even though he did not want any help from them.

Marroquin-Orellana was subsequently placed under arrest and taken to the station for booking on charges of disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, assault and battery, and threat to commit a crime.

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. Thank you for your assistance.

Help Keep Somerville Safe!

Mayor Joe Curtatone announces he will not run for re-election

CONT. FROM PG 1


employees that have served in his administration along with constituents that have supported these efforts.

“I’m amazed at the work city employees put in day in, day out,” said Curtatone. “And the volunteerism and advocacy that residents contribute in service of Somerville. But I have been blown away by how our staff and how our community have stepped up even more during this pandemic.”

The mayor went on to say, “I want to thank every city employee and every community member who is contributing. You have risen to the occasion under difficult circumstances. You’ve worked extra hours, you’ve taken on new tasks, and you found creative solutions to the problems COVID-19 threw at us. The work you’ve done to serve the people of this city has been outstanding. The city staff, I must add, you’ve been a beacon of dependability in a sea of chaos. The very best example of what it means to be public servants. I am honored to work with you, my fellow elected officials, alongside the people of Somerville.”

Curtatone summed up by saying, “To everyone I say take care of each other. Remain vigilant about checking the spread of this disease. Give the vaccines time to do their job. Help mentor, help a neighbor or a friend who’s struggling, if you can. And stay focused on our future. We will not simply get through this, we will seize this moment. Somerville is still moving forward. I thank you.”

The mayor’s midterm address video can be viewed on our website at: <http://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/106380>



Middlesex DA Marian Ryan announces policy to review and remove certain identifying information from website

Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan today announced the implementation of a new policy regarding identifying information on her office website, middlesexda.com.

Recognizing that the Office has an obligation to balance the public’s right to information with the potential long-term collateral impacts on the lives of individuals accused of crimes, the office has implemented a policy to accept requests from individuals or their attorneys for a redaction of certain identifying information. In some cases where a complete redaction request is not approved, the office would also consider publishing an update regarding the final outcome of the case.

“This new policy reflects our ongoing commitment to addressing the unintended consequences of the criminal justice system,” said District Attorney Ryan. “As is indicated in the policy, identifying information about juveniles who have been charged as youthful offenders is of particular concern, especially when these young people are acquitted of the charges. Moving forward, we will continue to prioritize our obligation to the public to ensure continued access to complete information that allows for the utmost transparency and to ensure both that justice is being served and that the public continues to have confidence in our work.”

Interested parties can contact the office using the online contact form [here](#) or by submitting a written request.

The full policy can be viewed on the website at: <https://www.middlesexda.com/public-information/pages/policy-middlesex-district-attorneys-office-concerning-redaction-identifying>



Somerville considers improving community services through development, equity programs

By Joe Creason

The Somerville City Council held a regular meeting to discuss committee reports, councilor orders and other matters of the city agenda, on Thursday, February 25.

The meeting began with a citation from the City Council and the Mayor's Office, honoring Marvin H. Spitzer for his 100th birthday. The citation recognized Spitzer as an honorable Somerville resident and WWII veteran.

Public hearings proceeded with the construction firm RCN petitioning to install conduit in order to connect existing man-holes to existing utility poles at locations including Whipple Street, Willow Avenue and Broadway. This is due to the fact that Eversource will no longer be

leasing their facility on Whipple street to RCN.

For the purposes of bypassing the old Eversource facility, RCN has connected a line running from Arlington in order to service Somerville.

The Council submitted an order to the Director of Health and Safety, Shape Up Somerville and the Somerville Food Security Coalition, so that they may discuss issues and prepare their recommendations for the Council regarding food access for anyone who needs nutritional assistance within the city limits.

Ward 7 Councilor Katjana Ballantyne submitted an order to the Director of Health and Human Services, to discuss a possible spike in COVID cases at Tufts University and if the University's statistics are being included in the general

data for Somerville.

According to Rocco DiRico, Director of Government and Community Relations for Tufts University, the school has reported 33 Covid cases over the last seven days and has a positivity rate of .15%. This rate is 10-fold lower than the overall Massachusetts positivity rate and the school currently has 59 students in isolation as well as 103 in quarantine, according to DiRico.

In an order submitted by Ward 3 Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen, the Committee on Housing and Community Development is to call a meeting for affordable home advocates and Housing staff to discuss policies that will address the racial disparities with regards to home mortgages in Somerville.

Ewen-Campen says that he would like the Committee to



consider policies which might resemble a program like Boston's One+. The city of Boston implements this program by creating a dedicated pool of money which is used to pay down the mortgage rate for qualified buyers. This has been used for the benefit of previously underserved and marginalized groups.

Policy discussions are moving

forward with regards to the civilian oversight board on police action. A community conversation will be held on Wednesday, March 24, at 6:30 p.m., where the City Council can hear stories and experiences of Somerville residents, so that these accounts may provide insight for councilors' influence legislation with regards to civilian oversight board.

Somerville remains in limited Phase 3, Step 1 reopening

The City of Somerville will not join the Commonwealth in the move to reopening Phase 3, Step 2 on March 1. Somerville will remain in the limited Phase 3, Step 1 stage of reopening that went into effect on February 1 until at least March 15.

Capacity limits in Somerville businesses will remain at 25% or the limit set in the business's City-approved health and safety plan until further notice.

Somerville also continues to hold the limit on attendance at gatherings to no more than 10 persons until further notice. The limit applies to both indoor and outdoor gatherings of any kind unless otherwise specifically permitted in City activity-specific guidelines.

For more information and regular COVID-19 updates, visit www.somervillema.gov/coronavirus and sign up for City alerts at www.somervillema.gov/Alerts. Community members are encouraged to sign up for every alert method: phone call, text, email. Also follow [FB.com/SomervilleCity](https://www.facebook.com/SomervilleCity) and [@SomervilleCity](https://twitter.com/SomervilleCity).

Dorothy's Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



Springing ahead with Irish Soda Bread

To make a truly authentic Irish Soda Bread, only four ingredients are needed: flour, salt, baking soda and sour milk. There are many variations of soda bread recipes that have been passed down through generations, some family specific. Some include adding butter, raisins, sugar, orange zest and even caraway seeds, these ingredients, bring their own uniqueness of flavors and textures to the bread. But, once any additional ingredient is added, it is no longer considered Irish Soda Bread, but rather a Tea Cake.

Some people may also be wondering how the bread rises without using yeast. It's a simple chemical reaction between the baking soda and the acid within the liquid (citric acid if lemon juice is used or acetic acid if vinegar is used). Once the ingredients are blended together, carbon dioxide gas is released, now creating a leavening effect.

This bread is so simple and easy to make, from start to finish about an

hour in total including the 50 minutes when the bread is in the oven.

Yield (1- 8" round loaf)

4 cups flour
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 cups soured milk* (see note below) or buttermilk
1 cup raisins (optional)
1/2 tablespoon caraway seeds (optional)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with slightly greased parchment paper. In a large bowl, mix together all dry ingredients, optional ones too, if you decide to use them. Add the preferred liquid of soured milk* or buttermilk and stir until the dough holds together. Knead on a floured surface until all ingredients are incorporated. Shape into an 8" round disk. The height of the dough will be about 1 1-2" thick. With a sharp knife, make an X across the top of the bread, about 1/4" deep. Transfer the loaf



to the prepared baking sheet. Place into the oven on the middle rack and bake for 45-50 minutes, or until it is slightly browned. Transfer to a cooling rack and let rest for a couple of hours.

*Note: To make your own soured milk just add 1 tablespoon of white vinegar or lemon juice to 1 cup of milk, stir, and let stand for 5-10 minutes. Once the milk slightly curdles, it's ready to use.

I like to serve the bread or tea cake with orange marmalade or strawberry preserves along with a steaming cup of English Breakfast Tea.

Please see the website for The Society for the Preservation of Irish Soda Bread at www.sodabread.info for a full history of Irish Soda Bread.

The above recipe was adapted from The Fannie Farmer Cookbook

Visit Dorothy's website at <http://ddimarzo2002.wix>.

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.

Working together to make bold change in 2021



By State Representative Christine Barber

One year into the COVID pandemic, we have many urgent needs across the Commonwealth. The pandemic has changed life for all of us and exposed wide disparities in our ability to access health care and housing, disproportionately harming communities of color. Simply put, there is a lot to do at the State House this session to meet this moment.

But I have hope that together we can make significant change. I am committed to working with the people of Somerville and Medford to provide equitable solutions for the challenges we face. As more people become active and engaged in organizing to improve our communities, we are heading in a promising direction. That organizing helped win

some recent fights at the State House - bold climate change legislation including environmental justice and net-zero goals, bills to protect reproductive health and health care access, and budgets supporting our community through rental subsidies and stronger eviction rules, unemployment assistance, and grants to small businesses and arts organizations.

As we begin the 2021-2022 state legislative session, it is imperative that we continue to address the systemic racism and white supremacy that has been present for so long in our recovery. I will continue to work with grassroots groups locally and across Massachusetts to build on our recent victories and find opportunities to move forward.

My primary goals are mitigating the impact of COVID-19 and paving the path for a strong, equitable recovery, by passing bills that improve access to health care and housing, shore up resources for early education and care, provide basic rights to immigrants and keep our air clean. My key priorities this session are:

- Ensuring people can afford their prescriptions. The cost of prescription drugs continues

to rise, and the pandemic has increased the urgency to make medications affordable, particularly for people with asthma, diabetes, and other illnesses that worsen COVID-19's impact. I've partnered with grassroots groups to tackle prescription drug prices, with a special emphasis on communities that face disproportionate barriers to accessing medications.

- Keeping people in their homes and creating more affordable housing. The COVID-19 outbreak has highlighted housing affordability as a basic health and safety need. In response, I have filed legislation to provide greater rental assistance to families who are struggling. I have also introduced legislation to update the state's fair housing law to prohibit the denial of housing developments in local communities solely because they would include affordable units for families.

- Ensuring immigrants' safety. Without the ability to apply for a Massachusetts driver's license, immigrants, many of whom are essential workers, put themselves at greater risk of contracting COVID-19, and have difficulty getting to work or taking a child

to the doctor. Working with local immigration activists, I have re-filed a bill to allow all people to apply for drivers' licenses, regardless of immigration status. Passing this bill would make an immediate, positive impact on the lives of immigrant families in Massachusetts.

- Providing children with opportunities to learn. Early education is a cornerstone of the state's recovery, and has been crucial for frontline workers throughout the pandemic. Early education and child care programs have been devastated by the pandemic, leaving many families and children without safe places to learn and play. Two bills I have filed will provide support to early education and out-of-school providers, including protections for the early educators in these programs.

- Keeping our air clean. The legislature recently passed a transformative climate change bill, but more work remains. In Somerville and Medford, motor vehicle, bus and truck traffic causes dramatically high asthma rates. I'm working with Representative Mike Connolly to address air quality, particularly for people who live near I-93. I am

also working to create state targets to convert buses and other fleets of vehicles to zero-emissions over the next decade.

I am proud of the collaborative efforts of so many people from Somerville and Medford on these issues. Your ideas and activism make this work possible, and I look forward to staying engaged with all of you. I encourage you to contact me directly with ideas, questions, and comments.

Though we face many challenges in these uncertain times, we also have new opportunities to work together and move our values forward to create real change. Somerville and Medford are vibrant communities filled with active, engaged residents, and we can be the example for others. By working together, we can ensure that basic rights and protections - like health care, education, safety, clean air, and housing - are available to all.

Christine P. Barber is a State Representative for the 34th Middlesex District, which includes neighborhoods in Somerville and Medford. Stay in touch with Christine on Facebook and Twitter, and sign up for her newsletter.

Say it ain't so, Mayor Joe



By Jack Connolly Jackconnolly422@gmail.com

Had to be a sad day in the Ville late last Friday afternoon when the City of Somerville opted out of joining the rest of the Commonwealth improving the tight COVID-19 restrictions, and relaxing the rules as of March 1st.

Without a doubt, countless Somerville merchants and small business operators and their employees are less than thrilled.

The light at the end of the proverbial tunnel is definitely much dimmer here in Somerville than our neighboring communities. Statewide, the firing gun for the start of the race to reopen stores, restaurants, and businesses has been fired, and Somerville operators are stuck at the starting line, unable to compete equally as of March 1st.

Say it ain't so, Mayor Joe?

The clarion call for action went out early Friday morning from long-time Somerville Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Stephen Mackey, who must've gotten wind of the City's intention not to get on the on the bus to reopen our local economy, as he advised Somerville Chamber of Commerce members by email to contact the Mayor and City Councilors to favor moving

with Massachusetts and neighboring communities, to reopen our handcuffed local economy by going to Phase 3 Step 2 on March 1st, and as public health continues to improve, move to Phase 4 Step 1 on Monday, March 22nd. Those pleas obviously fell on deaf City Hall ears.

Mackey was right to point out that COVID-19 rates and hospitalizations are on the decline, vaccination rates are rising, vaccine rollouts are accelerating, and vaccination site availability is widening daily, here locally, regionally, and around the country.

Are you saying it ain't so, Mayor Joe?

A year ago, not moving forward likely made sense, but as we move forward in succeeding weeks and months, Somerville restrictions certainly make

less sense; Chamber Director MACKEY points out that Somerville is not an island, and that most of us here in the Ville are less than a mile from another city, and certainly within Boston's urban core.

Here in my neighborhood of Davis Square, we're looking at 15 vacant storefronts, unknown number of vacant office spaces, and many merchants and small businesses are operating at a reduced capacity or not all; How about the Somerville Theatre? In 2019, some 200,000 patrons from all over the region attended the historic treasure of a theatre for movies, live performances, concerts, and comedy shows; Surely many attendees frequented local pubs and restaurants before or after Theatre visits.

Are you gonna say it ain't so,

Mayor Joe?

Nobody whether they are a Generation Z'er, a millennial Generation Y'er, or aging Senior, will doubt that protecting the health, safety, and well-being of our residents must remain job #1, but as Mackey points out, getting our Somerville economy back to life must be a close 2nd. Lets' join the rest of the Commonwealth, show some confidence in our residents and businesses to do the right thing moving ahead; As unlikely as it may seem, if it doesn't work out, you can always rollback then right?

Can you say it ain't so, Joe?

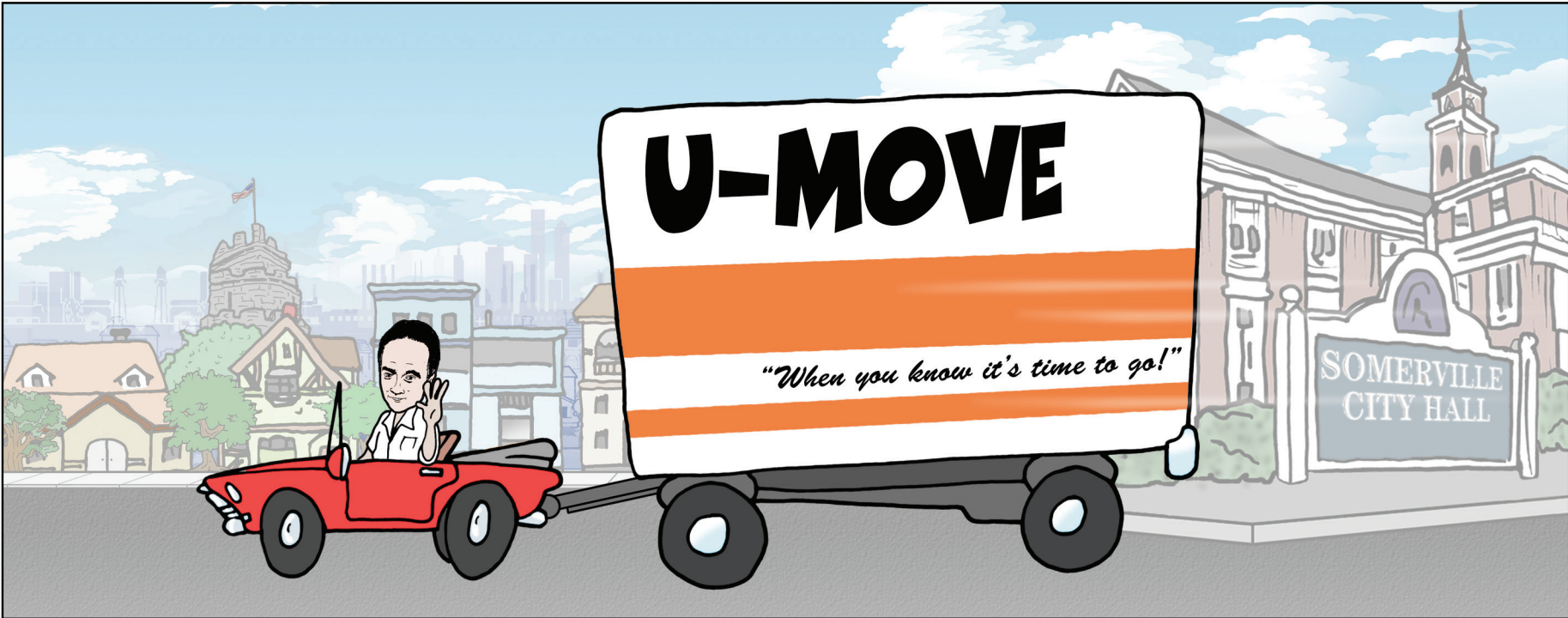
Jack Connolly
Davis Sq. Residential Home & Property Owner
Former Ward Six and At Large Alderman (now Councilor)

Be sure to visit us online at www.TheSomervilleTimes.com and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/somerville.times.1

COMMENTARY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Joe's outta here.

Our View Of The Times



Mayor Curtatone's announcement that he would not be seeking re-election came as quite a surprise to some, not so much of a surprise to others.

Rumors to the effect one way or the other have been running rampant over the course of the past year or so. But only one person knew for certain ... that is, once a firm decision had been made.

The mayor has not yet publicly disclosed

what factors led to this decision, leaving anyone concerned to merely speculate and wait to see what course Mr. Curtatone will follow once he leaves office.

Are there plans to pursue higher office, perhaps at the state or national levels? Or could an entry into the private sector be in the cards?

And what of the contest to come in search of a successor to the office?

How many contenders will emerge to test the waters and perhaps end up taking the plunge?

It seems as though the mayor's announcement has brought about a plethora of questions that only time and future events can answer.

There are already plenty of names being bandied about, and many others are undoubtedly yet to emerge. It will make for

interesting times for local politics. So, let the games begin.

In the meantime, let's not be too hasty in planning Mr. Curtatone's farewell party. He will still be running things for the better part of a year, and there is still a lot of weighty matters on his plate.

So, for now let's wish him the best for his remaining time in office and for whatever comes in the future.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

he has a great birthday. And to **Donald Coutoumas**, of the Somerville Coutoumas family, we hope he has a great birthday. We wish **Mike Browne** a very happy birthday. Mike is a great guy we wish him the best. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Laureen Chirichello**, **Sarah Colestock Berson**, **Barbara Neachtain**, **Susan Mangherini Griffin**, **Betsy Bragg**, **Scott Naugler**, **David Rudolph**, **Bob Schofield** and **Diane Marie Powers** a very happy birthday.

ROOTED Armory Cafe & Farmstand re-opened on **Tuesday, March 2**. Please plan to stop by frequently for delicious takeout menu items – including alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, and coffee drinks made at our espresso bar – and groceries featuring produce, dairy and pantry items, and beer and wine. Order online so that your order is ready when you come in. Open hours are Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. 191 Highland Ave.

The Union Square Video Projection Series, curated by **Andrew Ringler**, features local artists whose works represent: storytelling, abstraction and dance

from thirteen individual artists and artist collaboratives. Since November 2020, SAC have shown works from each group looping during the evenings, from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. The projection art is shown on a building facade in **Union Square**. **Through March**, they will be featuring dance-themed videos by artists: **Stephanie Sherman**, **Michal Hall**, **Melissa Castro**, **Mike Brun**, **Margaret Wiss**, and **Carven Boursiquot**. On **March 3** at 6:00 p.m., join Facebook Live for a panel discussion highlighting some of the participating artists and the project curator. More details will be added to the website soon: <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/projectionseries>.

Somerville Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone, **Ward 1 Councilor Matthew McLaughlin**, **Ward 3 Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen**, **Ward 4 Councilor Jesse Clingan**, and city staff invite you to a virtual community meeting to discuss implementation of the **Gilman Square Neighborhood Plan**. The meeting will focus on redevelopment at the Mobil gas station site, the former Homans Building site, and nearby green space called the Gilman Triangle on Medford Street behind Somerville High School.

City consultants will present conceptual illustrations developed with community input, discuss opportunities and challenges based on existing conditions, and gather feedback on land-use priorities. The meeting will be held online on **Wednesday, March 10**, at 6:00 p.m. Register to attend at tinyurl.com/GilmanZoning.

The **City of Somerville** has been building a new **Somerville High School** at the site of the existing one, using funds obtained locally and through a grant by the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The new campus will provide a state-of-the-art, innovative, and nurturing learning environment to SHS students for decades to come, and will serve as a premier community resource and gathering space. Its design – from site location to campus features – was refined through a community process of feedback surveys and public meetings. Take a virtual tour of the project's progress here: <https://www.shsproject.org/>

The state has announced that those accompanying someone 75 or older to their **COVID-19 vaccine appointment at state sites** are also eligible to get vacci-

nated. Anyone accompanying a senior to their vaccine appointment must have an appointment scheduled at the same site, on the same day, as the senior they are accompanying. To make an appointment at a state site, visit mass.gov/vaccine or call 211. Keep in mind that phone wait times may be long, so please be patient. The **City of Somerville** is also available to help those who face barriers to accessing vaccines including needing transportation or language assistance. If you are currently eligible to receive a vaccine – including those in Phase 1 or who are 75 or older – and need help accessing local vaccine resources, please call 311. 311 can also connect seniors to the **Council on Aging** for support in signing up for state vaccine clinics.

You can sign up to receive occasional phone calls updating you on the **latest COVID-19 vaccine information**, including where and how to get a vaccine. To subscribe, please visit somervillema.gov/covidvaccine or call 311. If you are already signed up to receive email and text notifications through the city's alert system you will also get this information. Again, this for people who would prefer to get vaccine updates

Continued on page 10

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.

State of Emergency called for Somerville women



By Kristen Strezo
Councilor At-Large

I wrote and introduced to the City Council last week a resolution calling for a State of Emergency to be declared in Somerville relating to the economic status of women, and how the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown has disproportionately impacted them and their workforce growth. Ward 7 Councilor Katjana Ballantyne co-sponsored the resolution with me.

The resolution calls on the mayor of Somerville to declare a State of Emergency facing the status of Somerville women. This is a direct response to the fact that since the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, women have lost decades worth of progress in less than a year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Many Somerville women are coping with the effects of being directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, from lack of childcare or inadequate childcare and job loss to threats of eviction. The U.S. Census Bureau also found that women have been cutting back hours or stepping back from their jobs entirely at three times the rate of their male peers.

We have to do something and come up with a plan. If we as a Somerville community do not respond to the glaring facts in front of us, we are set to travel down a disastrous path that cannot lead to an equitable society.

I will do everything I can to prevent that. I cannot stand by and watch and do nothing. We must take active steps to do everything we can to help support

our neighbors and our more vulnerable half of Somerville's population.

The resolution also states that when economic pandemic recovery begins, women must return to hospitable and responsive workplace environments. They deserve workplaces that consider family needs such as affordable and accessible childcare.

The full resolution reads as follows:

A Resolution Calling for a Better Future for Somerville's Female Workforce in 2021 and Beyond

WHEREAS, The 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic shutdown in the United States has disproportionately disenfranchised women in the workplace, prompting a loss of over three decades worth of employment progress in less than a year, (as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) and directly affects the lives and economic progress of Somerville women; and

WHEREAS, It is recognized that all parents, families and guardians have been experiencing hardship and are faced with constant difficult decisions regarding childcare, income and support while Somerville schools have shifted to fully remote online virtual learning since March of 2020, research consistently points to the fact that women, and those who identify as women, have disproportionately borne the brunt of the COVID pandemic shutdown; and

WHEREAS, Women predominantly occupy sectors of employment that focus on care such as teachers, childcare, elder care, home health aides and low-paid health care professions that have been both underpaid and exist with little chance for promotion for their societal importance, as recognized by the American Enterprise Institute-Brookings Paid Family Leave Project in 2020; and

WHEREAS, Women-dom-

inated industries hit hardest by the COVID shutdown, such as retail, childcare, hotel, flight attendants and restaurant industries with Latina and Black women are reporting the biggest job losses since March of 2020, as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics unveiled; and

WHEREAS, Women-boosted workplace prime-age participation was the singular driver of U.S. economic expansion from 2015 up to the 2020 pandemic shutdown, as reported by Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic shutdown forced schools to switch to remote online learning only, the U.S. Census Bureau found that women have reported cutting back hours or stepping back from their jobs entirely at a rate three times more frequently than their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, In 2020 during the shutdown of schools, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that women ages 25-44 cited childcare demands as their reason for not being able to work, almost three times as often as men; and

WHEREAS, Women in the U.S. accounted for 100% of the job loss claims in the United States in December 2020, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, with Black, Asian and Latina women accounting for all the jobs lost that month; and

WHEREAS, The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in January of 2021 that 8.4% of Black women and 9.1% of Latina women have experienced job loss rates significantly higher than their White female peers at 5.7%, with acknowledgement that data is not available for women who do not qualify for unemployment benefits; and

WHEREAS, According to the May 2020 Somerville Community Data Profile:

- + 49.7% of Somerville's population are women,
- + 17.7% of Somerville families

have a female lead householder with no husband present,

- + 28.2% of Somerville female householders with no husband present are living below the poverty line, and
- + unpartnered mothers bore the biggest drop in workshare than any other group of parents in 2020 and 2021; and

WHEREAS, When the post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery in the United States begins, it is unacceptable that women of all colors, creeds and immigration status in the United States and in Somerville should be subjected to return to the unpaid, underpaid, unsupported labor market with inadequate workforce support present such as before and during the COVID shutdown; and

WHEREAS, The failure to respond to this employment crisis facing women will undo decades of female progress; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, That the Somerville City Council calls on the Mayor to declare a State of Emergency facing Somerville women in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown job loss and the economic progress of the women of Somerville; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, That this Council asserts that Somerville must do its part to ensure that the former working considerations and the systemic discounting of women's contributions to society be eliminated and rebuilt entirely, and supported in every possible way, including making available all possible municipal support to elevate the status of all Somerville women to exist in equity with their male and non-binary counterparts; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, That this Council calls on local leadership to proactively work for realistic policy solutions that validate the needs of women, that support a local economic recovery plan for women, and make every possible effort to support Somerville women back into the workplace including:

- + Targeting more small business support towards women and women-owned businesses,
- + Creating additional mentorship and job development opportunities for Somerville women from young adult to senior years,
- + Conducting an immediate study of Somerville women to determine any other assistance necessary to support women in a COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery plan,
- + Specifically addressing institutional racism that affects women of color,
- + Accelerating hospitable working environments for female employees, free from any discrimination and with active supports for women, which may also include monitoring compliance of pregnancy and ADA requirements, and supporting flexible and realistic working schedules for parents, guardians and caregivers, and
- + Expanding and creating accessible childcare options that address the actual need of Somerville parents—including expanding and amply funding universal pre-K affordable childcare options, expanding out-of-school time options within Somerville schools and immediately pursuing state and federal funding to achieve these goals; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, That this Council urges the Mayor and the administration to take immediate steps supporting these efforts through staffing the Economic Development Department with a new position within the department to address this dire career need affecting Somerville women.

The resolution was approved at the latest meeting of the Somerville City Council on February 25.

You can go home CONT. FROM PG 3

life, drive through the city and see these changes in progress.

So, cruise through the city sometime.

There are still lots of landmarks left untouched. Drive by the old neighborhood and check it out. So far, they haven't tried to turn the Old Powder House into a condo yet. Older folks like me get very nostalgic when a familiar place disappears,

like Johnny D's, The City Club, Post 19 near The Y, and my old high school (I get very nostalgic seeing the SHS demolitions). I've heard that the Post and City Club will be back but other familiar places are gone for good. Here today, gone tomorrow. It's the price of progress.

We are extra emotional these days, especially with the pandemic. As familiar

landmarks are vanishing, we are at that age where friends and family members are also disappearing. It's a tough time for sure. Thankfully, they can't demolish memories.

My parents were part of The Greatest Generation and I remember when my father was my age. I thought he was old. He would often reminisce and tell me about

people, places and things that weren't around anymore.

Now I've become him. And so it goes. No condo, hotel, or other monstrous new structure can replace loved ones. It's been a deplorable past year but things are finally looking up. Stay safe and strong fellow Boomers. You've come a long way Baby! We've got this.

LEGAL NOTICES

Legal Notices can also be viewed on our website at www.thesomervilletimes.com



City of Somerville
PLANNING BOARD
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The **Somerville Planning Board (PB)** will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, March 18, 2021** at 6:00pm. Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, as well as Mayor Curtatone’s Declaration of Emergency, dated March 15, 2020, this public hearing will be conducted via remote participation.

The meeting will be held using GoToWebinar.
TO USE A COMPUTER
Link:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4229595146022441485>
Webinar ID: 758-868-131

TO CALL IN
Phone number: 1 (415) 655-0052
Access code: 904-760-833
The Planning Board will consider the following pursuant to M.G.L. 40A and the Somerville Zoning Ordinance:

120-132 Middlesex Ave Brickyard at Assembly LLC proposes a master plan to develop a 1.3 acre site in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use (ASMD) special district. The master plan includes an 18-story laboratory principal building with underground structured parking and was previously granted a Variance from the ASMD’s civic space requirement. The Applicant also requests multiple Special Permits to waive the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR), the maximum permitted building height, and to authorize occupancy of commercial spaces over 10,000 square feet by any permitted use.

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 Planning Board at the hearing or by submitting written comments by mail to Planning & Zoning Division, 3rd Floor City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143; or by email to planning@somervillema.gov.
3/3/21 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

GEORGE J. PROAKIS, AICP
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 16, 2021** 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 Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, as well as Mayor Curtatone’s Declaration of Emergency, dated March 15, 2020, this public meeting and hearings **will be conducted via remote participation.**
TO USE A COMPUTER

Registration URL:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1940087580890557711>
Webinar ID: 714-234-219
TO CALL IN
Phone Number: 1 (631) 992-3221
Access Code: 790-680-028

ALL OF THE CASES ADVERTISED BELOW HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING COMPONENT
DETERMINATIONS OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE (STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)

HPC.DMO 2021.06 – 1 Washington Street
Applicant: Niranjana Gawli
Owner: same as applicant
Demolish principal structure
HPC.DMO 2021.08 – 187 Central Street
Applicant: Nora, LLC
Owner: same as applicant
Demolish principal structure
HPC.DMO 2021.09 – 125 Highland Avenue
Applicant: Highland Masonic Temple Association, Co-Owner c/o Christopher Kenney
Owner: Barros Properties, LLC
Demolish principal structure

DETERMINATIONS OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED (STEP 2 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)
HPC.DMO 2020.27 – 129 Boston Avenue
Applicant: Eamon Fee
Owner: David Galvin
Demolish principal structure
HPC.DMO 2021.01 – 13 Allen Street
Applicant: K & K Development
Owner: same as applicant
Demolish principal structure
HPC.DMO 2021.02 – 21-23 Allen Street
Applicant: 19-27 Allen St., LLC
Owner: Jean Martelli
Demolish all structures
HPC.DMO 2021.03 – 27 Allen Street
Applicant: 19-27 Allen St., LLC
Owner: Jean Martelli
Demolish all structures
HPC.DMO 2021.05 – 377 Washington Street
Applicant: Thomas Lichoulas
Owner: Washington TN, LLC
Demolish all structures

While City Hall continues to be closed in response to the COVID19 pandemic, 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.
2/24/21, 3/3/21 The Somerville Times

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

via phone call. COVID vaccine information is also posted on the city website at somervillema.gov/CovidVaccine. You can also visit the state’s vaccine website, mass.gov/vaccine, for additional information.

CHA Somerville Hospital offers free COVID-19 testing at Assembly Row. To make an appointment, call 617-665-2928, Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The **mobile COVID-19 testing unit** also offers testing in our neighborhoods. Mobile testing schedules and more information on both can be found under the **“Symptoms, Testing, & Medical Info”** tab on somervillema.gov/covid19. The state also operates several **Stop the Spread testing sites**, including in the nearby communities of **Chelsea** and **Everett**. For more information, visit the state’s website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread>.

Make sure you’re **wearing the right face covering**. The CDC has guidance on choosing a face covering that best protects those around you. Three things to keep in mind: Your face covering should be made of at least **two layers of washable, breathable fabric**. It should **completely cover your nose and mouth**. It should **fit snugly against the side of your face**. That means if you’re getting a face covering for a child, you should look for one designed for smaller faces.

Somerville’s Winter Farmer’s Market takes place **Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., through April 10**, at 191 Highland Ave. Offering the best locally grown and produced agricultural items and more. Online pre-order market with a small outdoor “live” shopping market. They offer a diverse range of local and New England produce, as well as cheese, eggs, meats, fish, breads, pastries, chocolate, and wine. They feature rotating guest vendors each week, as well as live entertainment and activities. They accept SNAP/EBT, CREDIT and DEBIT cards. \$10 SNAP match for EBT customers. For market information visit: <http://www.somwintermarket.org>.

Apply for **small business relief funds**. The **City of Somerville** has made \$5 million available to small businesses in its third round of the **Small Business COVID-19 Relief Fund**. Eligible businesses can apply for grants of up to \$25,000. Applications are now available and will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Learn more about the funding, including eligibility requirements, or apply for funds online.

The Pandemic – Electronic Transfer (P-EBT) Program was created spring 2020 to provide eligible families funds to purchase food while schools were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic has been extended through the end of the 2020-21 school year. Visit <https://www.map-ebt.org/home/#ihd-tab> for additional information.

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FAX: 617.628.0422

Ms. Cam’s
From on page 8
Olio
Answers

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. January 20, 1944 | nue Grounds |
| 2. La La Land, 2016 | 8. Terrier |
| 3. Ricky Schroder in 1980 – 9 years old | 9. Fifteen yard penalty |
| 4. Meryl Streep | 10. The Ladies Mercury |
| 5. Gotham City | 11. Bill Lee |
| 6. Iron | |
| 7. Huntington Ave- | 12. Planchette |

Inclusionary Housing Program Virtual Office Hours

Thursday, March 4, 5:30 p.m. The Inclusionary Housing team is hosting weekly, recurring virtual office hours for the public to join and get questions answered, assistance with applications, etc.

Join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/591022621>

You can also dial in using your phone: United States: +1 (872) 240-3412

Access Code: 591-022-621

Winter Hill Bank announces new Board member

Winter Hill Bank’s CEO, Sandra McGoldrick is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Anthony Ciccariello to its Board of Directors. She stated “Mr. Ciccariello is our newest Board Member and he embodies the spirit of the communities that we serve. He will bring his talent and expertise in so many areas and we are fortunate to have him provide us with his skill and knowledge that is critical to Community Banking.”

Mr. Ciccariello’s work and professional involvement spans decades and includes both public and private sector experience. In his role as former Headmaster at Somerville High School he demonstrated a lifelong commitment to community service through active engagement in so many endeavors that has continued to this day. Mr. Ciccariello stated “Community involvement has always been important to me and I understand the vital role that banks offer in our communities and I am delighted to bring my skills to further Winter Hill Bank’s success.” Mr. Ciccariello also spent time in municipal government and was responsible for the preparation, analysis and presentation of the City of Somerville’s Budget.

Mr. Ciccariello holds a Masters of Education in Instructional Media from Boston State College and a B.S. Major in Political Science. “Winter Hill Bank is very fortunate to have him by our side as we continue to strengthen our local communities,” said Sandra McGoldrick Chief Executive Officer.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The views and opinions expressed in the commentaries and letters to the Editor of *The Somerville Times* do not reflect the views and opinions of *The Somerville Times*, its publishers or staff. Readers are invited to send letters to the editor to *The Somerville Times*. Please email your letters to News@TheSomervilleTimes.com or mail them to 699 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02144. *The Somerville Times* Reserves the right to edit letters for style, grammar and length. All letters must include an name and contact information. Contact information will not be shared with the public. We look forward to hearing from you.

In regard to Black History Month this year. Let the months to come, heading into February 2022 be a time when we collectively commit to discovering and documenting the rich African American History here in the city that we love so dearly. Let us commit to setting into motion a process of memorialization, remembrance, public education and inspiration.

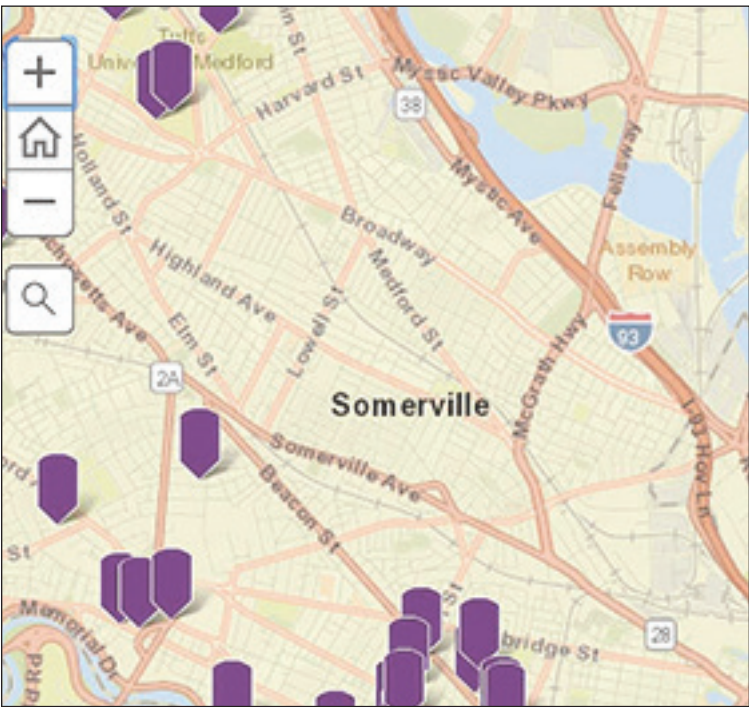
It may be a bitter pill for city officials to swallow, but the fact is that Somerville’s past and present commitment to our rich Black History does not align with its frequently expressed commitment to social justice and black activist movements.

There are no streets, places or buildings named, no plaques, no inscribed stones, along with other shortcomings. The words do not align with the actions, and the creation of a Memorialization Committee is not enough, when there is no active official pursuit to discover the past.

In 2017 an academic researcher at Tufts University documented the locations of notable events, people and places related to African American History in the Boston area. It was covered by WBUR in an article titled “Tufts Project Maps the Landmarks of Black Boston [<https://www.wbur.org/artery/2017/10/16/tufts-boston-black-history-trail>]” and the map included with it depicting Somerville is void of even one example. Somerville as seen on this map was and still is a cause for deep embarrassment.

It has been more than three years and the map is just as empty as when it was created. The city should have initiated efforts to fill in the map the day after the WBUR piece. Instead there was no shame and here we are. By February 2022 there will be no excuses for this disappointing state of affairs to have not been remedied.

Matthew Hoey
Cambridge



\$15 should be a start

I have difficulty believing that there are some amongst us who oppose a living wage.

Raising the basic minimum to a new baseline starting point of \$15 is a step towards breaking the poverty cycle and a path forward towards reduction of rampant racism. Keeping the hourly base low is a form of enslavement that prevents people from breaking out of the poverty cycle, and too many of this cohort are people who have been targets of the racists. It is a feudal mechanism meant to keep the labor input low so that employers, now because there is no slavery, can reap larger profits. It has become a way to control people, keep them in a certain social strata and remove a way for anyone in that strata to leave it.

Economists tell us that paying people more puts more discretionary income in their pockets so they will spend more and that increases demand. It’s simple economics. So why not pay more if we want to be real about this?

The argument that prices will increase is bogus and is just another false assertion against change. Costco, for example, pays above \$15 to start and this company is wildly successful growing significantly year after year. US multi-nationals in other countries pay far higher hourly rates and yet sell their products competitively (they typically also have paid leave, maternity leave and paid vacation). The result in those countries is a higher average standard of living, longer life expectancy, better healthcare, fewer homeless people, less poverty and less stress.

We are seeing the impact of poverty on the nightly news. Lines of cars waiting for food from food banks, people unable to pay rent, buy their medications and pay their bills because they have no money. In this wealthy country why is this so? It need not be.

If we want equality, if we want to curb racism, if we want to lift our country’s standard of living up then we must act. That means paying a living wage, now. Everyone will benefit, the tide will lift all boats, big and small as Costco has shown.

Alan Bingham
Somerville

Dear Editor,

I appreciated reading the February 15th article “AG Healey awards \$1.5 million in grants to promote racial equity in treatment of opioid use disorder” which includes the City of Somerville as a recipient. Two components struck me: 1) the restorative nature of the funding source and 2) the limited scope of cultural humility in practice.

It is promising to witness an act of monetary redistribution where settlement funds retrieved from an egregiously noncompliant pharmacy are transformed into dollars for treating BIPOC individuals with substance use disorder. Although this does not negate the original, or continued harm of corrupt distribution practices, it does provide a blueprint for enforcing reparations. Doing so acknowledges harmful practices at the institutional level which disproportionately impact marginalized communities of color.

I argue that we must keep this momentum up – that is thinking about harm at a systems and institutional level – when practicing culturally humility. Many of the current grantees are using the awarded money to hire bi-lingual peer recovery coaches and to train staff with culturally responsive curricula. This of course is highly necessary and points to how severely underfunded these agencies are to begin with; however, it does little to stretch beyond clinician-to-client care to address the systemic issues that lead to substance use disorders in the first place.

Cultural humility emphasizes mutual learning, fixing power imbalances, and self-reflection. Again, this is necessary to implement within health care agencies, but it is not enough to stop there. For example, a culturally responsive interpersonal practice may get more BIPOC clients in the door and increase retention rates, but it will not decrease the number of people needing treatment services. To truly enforce cultural humility, there must be a focus on addressing health disparities at personal, social, economic, and political levels to make changes in opioid use.

Taken together, I call on government officials to enhance reparative practices that acknowledge and address harm as the Attorney General’s Office has done while also expanding cultural humility practices beyond the interpersonal level. A culture doesn’t lie within one person alone and shouldn’t be treated as such.

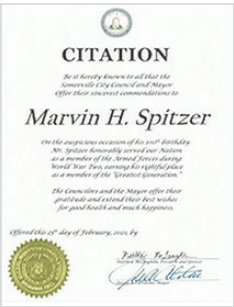
Thank you,

Melissa Burnett
Master of Social Work Candidate
Boston University

Marvin H. Spitzer honored on his 100th birthday

The Somerville City Council issued a special citation at their latest meeting on Thursday, February 25, honoring World War II veteran and 75-year Somerville resident Marvin H. Spitzer on his 100th birthday. The City of Somerville Veterans’ Services Department held a drive-by birthday celebration to honor Spitzer the following day.

The citation reads as follows: Be it hereby known to all that the Somerville City Council and Mayor offer their sincerest commendations to Marvin H. Spitzer on the auspicious occasion of his 100th birthday. Mr. Spitzer honorably served our Nation as a member of the Armed Forces during World War Two, earning his rightful place as a member of the “Greatest Generation.” The Councilors and the Mayor offer their gratitude and extend their best wishes for good health and much happiness. Offered this 25th day of February, 2021.



The Chemistry of FiberLab: An Exploration of Textile Arts CONT. FROM PG 1

and experimental approach. There are no wrong answers in the ‘Lab because all efforts, even those that end unexpectedly, are successful in advancing our knowledge and enhancing discovery.”

Exposure to a variety of techniques and skills is what drives many to participate in Colella’s collective. “I joined FiberLab for

a couple of reasons,” says Ellen Solari, a Belmont fiber artist who focuses on fiber sculptures. “When I joined, I was a relative newcomer to the world of fibers. There were so many techniques that joining Fiber Lab gave me an opportunity to experiment with a wide variety of approaches and materials. It also intro-



Basket of Deplorables by Marianne Moore.



Upside Down World by Amy Pett.

duced me to other fiber artists. At FiberLab, I found my tribe.”

For Amy Pett, a fiber artist in Jamaica Plain, FiberLab gives her an opportunity to see her work differently and continue to evolve as an artist. “Jodi and FiberLab have enriched my art practice in so many ways: getting me going again when I’ve been stuck, teaching me new techniques and new ways to use materials that have inspired new directions for my own art, seeing the wonderful work of the other artists in FiberLab and being inspired by them, and being a community of artists and friends who can share the highs and lows of being an artist. And especially during this dark time, I have felt held and supported by Jodi and the other FiberLabbers.”

“Artist’s work is often solitary and there is much discussion about the benefits of art communities for the health and wellbeing of individuals,” says Colella. “Each of us brings different experiences and skillsets that add to the diversity of the mix. We have become a beloved bunch who are invested in each other’s objectives while encouraging risk-taking in the development of a personal voice.”

The work of more than 16 artists will be featured in the exhibition. The pieces investigate the processes used in mixed media 2D, 3D, painting, printmaking, needle arts, surface design, dyeing and more.

Artists include: Tori Costa, Judith Felton, Molly Foley, Rebekah Lord Gardiner, Cassandra

Goldwater, Meck Groot, Denise Howard, Cindy Kennelly, Jean Masland, Charlotte Moore, Amy Pett, Stacey Piwinski, Ellen Solari, Dayna Talbot, Rebecca Tuck, Cynthia Walat, Karen Weinhaus and Rochelle Zohn.

The Chemistry of FiberLab will run through April 4. A virtual opening reception is currently scheduled for Sunday March 14, from 5:00 pm to 6:00 p.m. The reception is open to the public.

Lexington Arts & Crafts Society, 130 Waltham St, Lexington, MA 02421. Exhibition Dates and Hours: March 14 – April 4, Wednesday – Friday, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Free admission. Additional information: <https://www.lexart.org/chemistry-of-fiberlab>

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By Bobbygeorge Potaris

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On This Day in History

March 3

1791 – Congress passes a resolution authorizing the U.S. Mint. Legislation creating the mint will be passed on April 2, 1792.

1803 – The first impeachment trial of a U.S. Judge, John Pickering, begins.

1845 – Florida becomes the 27th U.S. state.

1863 – President Abraham Lincoln signs the conscription act compelling U.S. citizens to report for duty in the Civil War or pay \$300.

1877 – Rutherford B. Hayes is elected president, his election confirmed by an electoral commission after disputed election the previous November.

1923 – The first issue of Time magazine is published. Its editor, Henry R. Luce, is just out of Yale.

1969 – Sirhan Sirhan testifies in a court in Los Angeles that he killed Robert Kennedy.

1999 – Former White House intern Monica Lewinsky appears on national television to explain her affair with President Bill Clinton.

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OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

Somerville's Robson Lemos:
A Brazilian Chef with a
taste for the theater

I was glad to catch up with Robson Lemos, a chef and now a theater producer. He is one of the many artists in "The Paris of New England" who have an interesting and eclectic background.

Doug Holder: How did you discover Somerville, and how has it been for you?

Robson Lemos: I arrived in the USA in 2004. For an immigrant, it is difficult to build the feeling of belonging. In 2007, I came to visit a friend at Union Square in Somerville and there was a summer festival going on. The artist on stage was Brazilian and invited me to sing a song, and from there I fell in love with the city.

The following year I moved to the city and started participating in various artistic events in the city. Somerville is a city that not only offers spaces for artists but also for immigrant artists, and that is why I have always felt welcome.

In 2015 I was invited to participate in a culinary course in the city. So I started to participate in several events in the city as a chef. I am part of the culinary group "Nibble Kitchens" in Somerville.

DH: You are from Brazil, but you often say you are from the Brazilian state, Bahia. Is there different cultural feel to Bahia?

RL: I always say I am from Bahia, but when I participate in international interviews it is difficult to explain deeply about Brazilian culture so I talk more about Brazil in general. But Bahia, in particular, is the Brazilian state with the largest black concentration outside Africa. Although I am not black, here in the USA I am considered a person of color. I grew up within an Afro-Brazilian culture.

DH: You are an actor?

RL: Yes, I am an actor and that is my great passion. My first contact with theater I was 13 years old and it was through a method called: theater of the oppressed. I discovered that we are all oppressed in some way and the basis of creation is in the breakdown of oppression. So being an actor for me is to express, create, speak and use art as a form of education.

In 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, we had the Black Lives Matter Movement and the mayor of Somerville declared that racism is a matter of public health.

I identified with this statement because in addition to being an artist and a chef, I also work in an organization called the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers and became a community health worker. In various training courses I realized how the racial issues interfere with public health issues.



Using art and education as an instrument of empowerment would initially be a good way to combat racism.

DH: Tell us about the play you are working on?

RL: In *Omolu* I bring African mythology to tell a story of discrimination.

Omolu was an African God who was abandoned by his mother and lived wandering around Africa. He had a skin disease and covered his whole body with straw.

Omolu traveled around many lands and met several other gods and nobody accepted him until he was found by YEMANJA, queen of the sea. She adopted Omolu as her son and healed her wounds with seawater. Oxala, the father of all, recognized Omolu as the god of healing.

Omolu is a history of inclusion using elements of African mythology with a Brazilian touch. Initially, I thought it would be a concert but because of the pandemic I decided to make the recordings separately, as a form of documentary. This project involves theater, music, dance, capoeira, visual arts, culinary, and political speeches with history teachers.

We started doing outreach in December, rehearsals in January, recording thematic in February and editing in March.

My intention is to offer this project as a gift to the city of Somerville, so that future generations know that Somerville welcomes and includes all the stories, my story and the story of *Omolu*.

Brazil has the largest black population on the American continent and obviously reflects a lot on cultural expression. As in the USA, Brazil faces problems with racism. The Black Lives Matter movement will also influence racial movements in Brazil in the future.

Lyrical

SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Rianon Prushinski is a senior English major at Endicott College in Beverly, MA. She's grown up on the North Shore all her life in Lynn, MA. As she concludes her career at Endicott, she's working on her first novel, as well as a chapbook of poetry and flash fiction for the Ibbetson Street Press/Endicott College Young Writers Series.



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Or sit neck deep in the River Styx
Let mermaids slap you in the face with their tails.

Eat the sweet fruit from apple trees.
Brush golden hair in the mirror.
It's not all bad; not all the time.
The worst pain is surprise.

Tear it out
Fall to your knees
Kiss the devil on the cheek
Say hell to Icarus for me
Miss the sun
The bagpipes get louder
The autoharps are out of tune.

What I wouldn't do for a good goddamn cup of coffee?

— Rianon Prushinski

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