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Building Commissioner and Fire Chief order closure of 90-92 Union Sq. building



The current occupants of the 90-92 Union Sq. building have been ordered to vacate the property by the end of August due to perceived safety concerns.

The Somerville Building Commissioner, in consultation with the Somerville Fire Chief, has ordered that the City's 90-92 Union Square building close to the public on August 31 due to public safety risk.

In 2019, city and independent inspectors determined that the building, which dates to the late 1880s, needed significant structural repair. Emergency repairs were made at the time, but the assessments found that complete gut renovation is required for full and lasting building repair.

In early April, the city gave final notice to both tenants, two Somerville nonprofits, to close operations by the end of August to protect the public as well as the organizations' staff, clients, and members. The city has voluntarily provided and offered both nonprofits a range of relocation support.

"The stability of the building is being affected by water infiltration due to precipitation." *Continued on page 4*

The greatest films of all time: Coming soon to Somerville Theatre

By Jason Gutierrez

Bask in nostalgia at the Somerville Theatre's Sight and Sound Summer Vacation film series. From August 21 to 30, escape the summer heat with ten films that have aced the test of time. Much like summertime's salt air and warm nights, this showcase promises to delight.

The British Film Institute's *Sight and Sound* magazine, the series' namesake, challenges film professionals to whittle the apple of their eye to its core with their once-a-decade Poll of the Greatest Films of All Time. The well-respected list sits fondly in the heart of global movie lovers, including the date-gone-wrong who cannot believe your favorite movie was released in the 2000's.

Poll participants have grown

Continued on page 23



The Sight and Sound Summer Vacation film series begins on August 21 with *Singin' in the Rain* at 7:30 p.m. Stop by the Somerville Theatre for more information.

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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.

The 9th Annual Evolution of HipHop Festival is happening this Saturday, August 19 (rain date 8/20) in Union Square (Somerville). Celebrate 50 years of HipHop at the festival. An Arts Union event produced by Wat's Da Wurd Radio and Television.

Happy birthday this week to several locals: Happy birthday to Courtney O'Keefe of Ward 5. We wish her a great birthday. Happy birthday to Cliff Clark. We wish him the very best. Happy birthday Jenny Bonham Carter. We wish Jenny a great day. We wish all our celebrating Facebook friends, such as Joseph Amaral Sr., Adam Knight, Patricia Toner, Roy Bertocchi, Carmine D Ambrosio D Ambrosio, Maureen Mareenna, Anna Rosella, Valerie Mitchell, Laureen DeBrase, Pat Lane and Pam Keith a very happy birthday. We hope everyone has a great day. To all the others we may have missed, we sincerely wish them the very best of birthdays.

The city is hosting two Municipal Firefighter Exam registration events at the Somerville Fire Station (266 Broadway) on Thursday, August 17, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, and Thursday, August 24, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Hear from the experts: Somerville Fire Department and Human Resources staff will be onsite to answer your questions and assist with applications, which are being accepted until Tuesday, August 29. A \$75 exam fee waiver is available for qualifying candidates. Learn more and apply

Continued on page 7

Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of August 16 – August 22 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
Wednesday August 16	Cloudy	74°/64°	22%	16%	ENE 7 mph
Thursday August 17	Rain	75°/67°	32%	23%	ESE 9 mph
Friday August 18	Thunderstorms	81°/59°	81%	73%	SSW 14 mph
Saturday August 19	Sunny	78°/61°	5%	3%	W 11 mph
Sunday August 20	Sunny	83°/67°	6%	3%	S 11 mph
Monday August 21	Partly Cloudy	81°/60°	22%	15%	NW 9 mph
Tuesday August 22	Partly Cloudy	78°/62°	20%	13%	N 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: Cabot, Cabot & Forbes and Cannon Hill
Capital Partners Acquire Mystic Avenue Site in Somerville, MA

Nels says:

Is Somerville transitioning to being an international style city with buildings and street life from an American style city with highways and parking oceans? Hopefully this developer understands how cities are designed in the civilized world.

Response to: The future of Armory building discussed at meeting

Arts at the Armory says:

The Center for Arts at the Armory is an independent 501c3 non-profit that leases the performance hall and cafe from the City and is not associated with the City of Somerville or the Somerville Arts Council. The Center for Arts at the Armory is hosting their own community meeting on August 15 at 7pm to address what transpired at the City meetings on July 24 and August 1 and how to take action on the proposed city plans.

Response to: Proposed redevelopment of 28-44 Broadway discussed

NA says:

The solution to the parking situation is simple: first parking permit is cheap, anything more and they go up in price. A lot. Like: second one is 200, third 500... etc. sick of these tenements with 20 people per unit each with their own car. Parking in public space is a choice. Pay for it.

Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments

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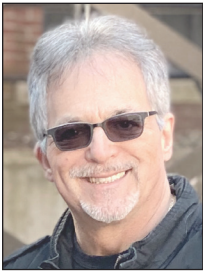
Massachusetts

VILLE

The Spirit of America

by Jimmy Del Ponte

Thumbs out!



Back in the 70s I used to hitchhike to Amherst to visit my girlfriend at UMass. I go up there every weekend and it was always an adventure coming. The story is about hitchhiking back in the day.

“Hitchhiking from the bus stop to Sandy Beach at the Mystic Lakes. And we were all 11-13 years old. More locally, hitchhiking to Davis Sq. to save the bus fare.”

“The first time and the last that I hitchhiked was with my friend Linda we went to Revere Beach in the 60s lol.”

“The Lakes all the time. Hampton on occasion. Then the year after we couldn't play Connie Mack Ball anymore my friend and I thumbed to Albany NY to watch Somerville play in the tournament there.”

“Somerville to Lynn. We would call it Nahant the Bath House. Great Times!”

“I actually met who is now my wife in Davis square she and her friend were hitchhiking. Funny how things happen.”

“I actually met who is now my wife in Davis square she and her friend were hitchhiking”

“Hitchhiked everywhere! Had some scary situations! Then ... when I got my license and a car, I would pick up hitchhikers. Had some scary situations! YIKES!”

“Bob M and I hitchhiked up to Montreal, across to Vancouver, down to LA, then back to Boston, straight out of graduating SHS in '72, at the tail end of the hitchhiking era.”



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Call 857-488-5138
and speak to the Assignment Editor

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Building Commissioner and Fire Chief order closure of 90-92 Union Sq. building

CONT. FROM PG 1

As the severe weather season intensifies, extreme weather poses additional threats to the load capacities of the building. It was determined that August 31, 2023, was the latest possible date for a safe exit of occupants,” said Building Commissioner Nick Antanavica, noting that it is especially important to clear and secure the building before the potential for snow.

Both nonprofit tenants, the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS) and the Somerville Media Center (SMC), have occupied the building for decades at highly subsidized rates. The two organizations were first alerted to the need to vacate in the fall of 2019. Covid-19 disruptions then kept the public out of the building during the peak of pandemic. This decreased use of the space, as well as temporary repairs, enabled the city to safely grant multiple occupancy extensions to both organizations to afford them more time to search for new locations.

In April 2023, however, extension beyond August 31 was deemed to be unsafe. An independent structural engineering review this spring by CambridgeSeven, Associates, Inc., reinforced this assessment. Once the Building Commissioner and Fire Chief have closed a building for safety reasons, only they have the authority to reopen it once the required safety measures have been taken.

“The vacating of a building can be seen as a drastic step, but it is sometimes necessary to preserve life safety,” said Antanavica. “We can’t predict when a failure will happen. We can only use our best judgment using the information available to us to make the best decision to ensure safety of the public. While working in another town, I had to make an unpopular decision to order the closure of an unsound structure that housed youth programs serving more than 100 kids per day. Then the structure collapsed due to snow load several months after

the closure. Fortunately, because it was empty, no one was hurt or fatally injured.”

The two nonprofits were informed in summer 2022 that it was not reasonable to expect the temporary repairs to hold much longer, and that it was time to work toward the building’s closure for everyone’s safety. They were then given 5-month’s notice on April 5, 2023, of the need to close operations by August 31.

Staff members will have supervised access through September for storage and to move their offices. The city will then complete efforts already underway to secure the building including construction of scaffolding to help protect the public from potential fall risk for elements on the exterior of the building.

Both the former Curtatone administration and the Ballantyne administration have voluntarily offered a range of supports to both organizations over the past three-and-a-half years. In addition to location search support offered by the city’s Economic Development Division, the city found ways to offer financial assistance to both, despite having no legal obligation to do so.

“No one wanted for these two valued nonprofits to face this kind of disruption, which is why we’ve offered financial support and all the extensions we safely could. Our duty here is to first protect safety, and our goal for both of these organizations is not just to offer aid with a transition but to provide the support and resources they need to thrive,” said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne.

Ballantyne’s administration awarded MAPS \$103,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support the move of their offices within Somerville. This includes funding that may be used to find, rent, and renovate a new location, moving and early rental fees, as well as for retrofitting the space for their needs, specifically their health services. MAPS also operates out of their headquarters

in Inman Square near the Cambridge-Somerville line.

The city also proffered a proposal to SMC that would boost their usual three-year city grant agreement by more than a projected \$1 million, more than doubling the city’s contribution compared to their last city grant. As SMC looks to move their larger offices and media production facilities to a new location that they have already identified in Somerville, this would bring SMC’s City grant funding to a projected \$2.1 million over three years (2023-2025) with a portion still subject to annual City Council appropriation in years two and three. Negotiations remain active.

“The vacating of a building can be seen as a drastic step, but it is sometimes necessary to preserve life safety”

The difference in support level for each nonprofit is due to the nature of the facilities each organization needs to relocate as well as the availability of different funding sources for each. Under state law, the city cannot simply provide general funds from tax revenue to nonprofits to support their independent fixed costs such as operations or rent, so other funding sources were needed. MAPS was eligible for ARPA federal funds. As the city’s designated Public Access television provider, SMC is eligible to receive fixed cost funding from Cable franchise fees collected by the city.

Future of the Building

The former firehouse is one of many buildings in the city that require renovation. Major investment is also currently needed for schools including the Winter Hill and the Brown schools, the

city’s active fire houses, and other vital infrastructure. The city does not have the current fiscal capacity to prioritize the projected \$7 million to \$10 million renovation of 90-92 Union Square before these other significant and pressing needs. The city is however committed to developing a plan for its future. Mayor Ballantyne has made it clear that community input must help shape future plans for the building.

“Right now, we are focused on continuing to assist these two important organizations in their transition to new locations, but I also want the community to understand the broader tremendous infrastructure needs in our city,” said Ballantyne. “Somerville is an older city with deteriorating older structures. That’s why from day one, I’ve focused the city on strategic planning to address our top infrastructure and building needs. That includes planning to renovate our school buildings and fire stations, upgrading our sewer services, improving our roadways, and more. We are finally in a financial position to start addressing the backlog of repairs so that we can fully benefit from these resources that serve our community, and we must do so strategically and deliberately.”

Seeking to explore a viable way to move up the renovation date of the 90-92 Union Square building, the former Curtatone administration put out a call for renovation proposals funded by outside sources. In 2021, they received one from the nonprofit Fab Foundation in partnership with US2, the Union Square master developer. The proposal involved fully renovating the building to the ADA’s accessibility standards. The building would have become Fab Foundation’s nonprofit global headquarters makerspace with workshops, trainings, public hours, and a makers’ café with space for larger events hosted by Fab Foundation and other nonprofits. The renovation would have been financed by US2, as a portion of the more than 70,000

square feet of Arts and Creative Enterprise space due to be built as part of their Union Square Master Plan.

To allow the current nonprofit occupants to stay in the building as long as was safe, neither the Curtatone nor the Ballantyne administration acted on the Fab Foundation-US2 proposal. Renovation of the building while fully occupied was deemed unfeasible by City engineering and legal staff. As an old fire station, the second floor is suspended from the roof, complicating any repair efforts. The major repairs needed for the roof, clock tower, and masonry would also trigger federal ADA requirements for additional renovations, including the installation of an elevator. The range of repairs combined would necessitate a full gut rehab and renovation.

Recent Building Assessment Findings

The CambridgeSeven report on 90-92 Union Square is available at somervillema.gov/90UnionReport2023, and below are some critical notes it contains:

“Each rain or snow event allows more water to enter and to further deteriorate the structural roof framing. The longer repairs are delayed, the greater amount of repair and replacement of structural members will be required and the greater risk for failure of major structural elements supporting both the roof and the second floor. We do not recommend any “no-build alternative” or additional delay to address the water infiltration issues.”

“Perimeter eaves and flashing of the high roof, the perimeter of the low roof and through multiple breaches of the clock/watch tower continues to be a major threat to the structural integrity of the building structure. Until the existing roofing systems are repaired, and the clock/watch tower is either properly restored, rebuilt, or demolished, water infiltration will continue and will

Continued on page 19

Winter Hill Community Innovation School prepares for the fall

By Maile Blume

When concrete fell from the ceiling of the Winter Hill Community Innovation School this past June, the city closed the facility to conduct a building assessment, and made plans to relocate students for the fall with students in grades one through eight moving to the Edgerly Education Center, and students in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten moving to the Capuano Early Childhood Center. However, ongoing construction at the Edgerly building and the discovery of asbestos in window caulking in the building is raising concerns among parents about if the elementary and middle school students will have a safe place to learn by the start of the school year.

The asbestos is being removed from the Edgerly building according to a safe and standard procedure, said the director of Infrastructure and Asset Management for Somerville, Richard Raiche, at a public meeting held for parents and teachers last Thursday.

"As long as those materials are undisturbed or handled properly, they pose no threat," he said, adding, "Construction professionals are well versed in the procedures to safely handle and dispose of those materials during renovations." A third-party inspector hired by the city is also carefully monitoring the process, said Raiche.

The construction team has been working on the Edgerly building at a "breakneck" pace, taking on night and weekend shifts to make sure that the building is ready for students by the start of the school year, he added.

Parents and teachers at the public meeting raised several questions, including what will happen if construction at the Edgerly building is not completed in time, how students will commute safely to the Edgerly building in the presence of traffic and snow, and what the timeline is for stu-

dents to be able to return to the Winter Hill Community Innovation School building.

When asked by parents what contingency plans the city has if the Edgerly building is not completed by the start of the school year, Superintendent of the Somerville Public Schools Dr. Rubén Carmona said that he is confident that the facility will be ready in time, and that there is currently no contingency plan in place. He added that if there are any changes to the construction timeline, parents will be promptly notified.

Parent Ethan Contini-Field asked for reassurance that the city will have a plan in place in case the building is not finished by the start of the school year. "This entire process has been characterized by issues and events that the city did not anticipate. We did not anticipate concrete falling from the ceiling of the Winter Hill, and as a result of not anticipating that, my kids missed four days of school," said Contini-Field.

"We did not anticipate asbestos at the Edgerly and as a consequence of not anticipating that and planning for it, the AIM kids (students in a program for children on the autism spectrum) missed three days of programming and didn't get to say goodbye to their teachers. We didn't anticipate asbestos at Winter Hill and now our teachers can't go into the building to get the things that they need to bring over to Edgerly. I need reassurance that you have a plan for when the next unanticipated thing happens, because every time we don't anticipate something, it's been the teaching and learning, and the students and teachers who pay the price for the lack of proactive contingency planning," Contini-Field added.

Carmona responded, "We have thoroughly assessed all the options in the district, and there is no other space that will hold that large number of students. And so



The city will decide whether to renovate or demolish and rebuild the Winter Hill Community Innovation School building after receiving a full assessment of the facility.
— Photo by Maile Blume

I am committed to making sure that the Edgerly will be delivered on time, and we will be able to keep all the community up to date on a regular basis."

In response to a question on transportation, Carmona said that coming up with transportation options for students has been an ongoing challenge given the significant shortage of bus drivers. "That's something that really has kept me awake at night, trying to figure it out," he said. Carmona added that he is collaborating with the Somerville mayor to look into smaller buses or vans to transport students, but so far they have not been able to find these resources. "We haven't given up on that — we'll continue to explore any options," he said. Carmona asked families to complete a survey about their transportation needs, to help prioritize seats on existing school vehicles for students who need them most.

Parents also raised concerns about students commuting on foot. When asked how students will be able to safely cross McGrath Highway when walking to the Edgerly School, the head of the Transportation and Infrastructure Division of the Office of Strategic Planning and

Community Development, Brad Rawson, said that the city will be publishing recommended crossing routes, including the Otis Street pedestrian bridge and the Gilman Street underpass. "Those two, separate facilities will provide families the ability to cross McGrath without having to cross at the big intersections," said Rawson. Additional safety measures will also be in place during students' commutes, he said. These include crossing guards at the corner of Pearl Street, and the elimination of a travel lane in each direction on McGrath highway — making the highway four lanes instead of six.

Rawson also said that the city has been testing proactive methods for snow removal over the last couple of years, and will prioritize implementing these measures in certain locations, including the stretch of Broadway from Clarendon Hill to Sullivan Square, which runs parallel to the Edgerly Education Center. On snowy days, inspectional services staff will proactively document where snow has not been removed on this route, and a contracted snow removal team will immediately follow up by clearing those areas, said Rawson.

"I want to assure folks that we take the snow removal very seriously in terms of safe routes to school for our students, families, and staff," he added.

Looking towards the future, Raiche said that the next stage of construction of the Winter Hill Community Innovation School building will likely be determined this fall or winter, after the city conducts a full hazardous material assessment of the facility, in response to asbestos being found in a sample from the building. "Once we've done that next level of investigation in that building, we're going to make all that public," he said, adding, "It's all going to inform the next stage of renovating the building or demolishing the building."

Chief of Staff and Strategy for Somerville Public Schools Susana Hernandez Morgan said that families of Winter Hill Community Innovation School students will continue to receive weekly updates on the school's plans for the fall. She also encouraged families to reach out with any further questions to communications@k12.somerville.ma.us. "We really appreciate your time, and look forward to welcoming kids back to school soon," she said. *Continued on page 10*

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. There were no roll call votes in the House or Senate last week. This week, Beacon Hill Roll Call reports local senators' roll call attendance records so far for the 2023 session.

The Senate has held 61 roll calls so far in the 2023 session. *Beacon Hill Roll Call* tabulates the number of roll calls on which each senator voted and then calculates that number as a percentage of the total roll call votes held. That percentage is the number referred to as the roll call attendance record.

Thirty-two (82 percent) of the current 39 senators (one seat is vacant) did not miss any roll calls and have 100 percent roll call attendance records.

It is a Senate tradition that the Senate president only votes occasionally. Current Senate President Karen Spilka follows that tradition and only voted on 12 (20 percent) of the 61 roll calls while not voting on 49 (80 percent) of them.

Six (15 percent) of the 39 senators, other than Spilka, missed one or more roll calls. Sen. Liz Miranda (D-Boston) has the worst record. She missed nine roll calls for a roll call attendance record of 85.2 percent.

The other five senators missed one roll call each for a roll call attendance record of 98.3 percent. They are Sens. Mike Barrett (D-Lexington), Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), John Keenan (D-Quincy), Patrick O'Connor (R-Weymouth) and Mike Rush (D-West Roxbury).

Beacon Hill Roll Call contacted the six senators asking why they missed some roll calls. Only one of the six responded.

"Although present in the Senate chamber for the one roll call in which I did not participate this session, I chose not to vote due to a potential conflict of interest," said Sen. Keenan.

The vote Keenan missed was on Gov. Maura Healey's reorganization plan that would split the current Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development into two separate cabinet level departments: the new Secretary of Housing and Livable Communities and the renamed Secretary of Economic Development. Keenan did not respond to a request by Beacon Hill Roll Call to explain the potential conflict of interest.

Sens. Miranda, Barrett, Gomez, O'Connor and Rush did not respond to repeated requests by Beacon Hill Roll Call asking them for a statement.

SENATORS' 2023 ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE RECORDS THROUGH AUGUST 11, 2023

The percentage listed next to the senator's name is the percentage of roll call votes on which the senator voted. The number in parentheses represents the number of roll calls that he or she missed.

Sen. Patricia Jehlen 100 percent (0)

ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

GOV. HEALEY SIGNS \$56 BILLION BUDGET – Gov. Maura Healey signed into law a \$56 billion fiscal 2024 state budget. The package represents a 6.2 percent increase over last year's budget signed by Former Gov. Charlie Baker. Healey vetoed \$272 million in spending and the Legislature now has the opportunity to override the vetoes with a two-thirds vote of each branch.

"This budget makes our state more affordable, competitive and equitable," Healey said. "It will make a real and meaningful difference in the lives of people across Massachusetts, lowering their costs, expanding access to opportunity, improving the quality of their life."

Provisions include \$171.5 million to fund a requirement that all public schools provide free school lunches to all K-12 students in all schools regardless of family income; and free breakfast only to the students in schools which participate in the breakfast program. According to Project Bread, which was at the forefront of the coalition working to pass the law, 1,961 (91.8 percent) of Bay State schools participate in the breakfast program.

Massachusetts has now joined seven states, California, Colorado, Maine, Minnesota, New Mexico, Vermont and Michigan that have passed laws to make school meals permanent.

"Today, Massachusetts made history," said Erin McAleer, President and CEO of Project Bread. "This victory for families across the commonwealth will have a lasting impact on generations of students to come."

The package also allows undocumented/illegal immigrants to qualify for the lower in-state college tuition rate if they attended high school here for at least three years and graduated or completed a GED.

Other provisions include \$50 million to support free community colleges; \$50 million to create Green School Works, a program to fund projects to install and maintain clean energy infrastructure at public schools; \$6.59 billion in Chapter 70 education funding for cities and towns, an increase of \$604 million over last year; \$504.5 million for the special education circuit breaker; \$181 million for MBTA capital projects; \$19.81 billion for MassHealth, the state's Medicaid program that provides health care

for low-income and disabled persons; and a new law that prisons must provide free unlimited incoming and outgoing phone calls for prisoners.

THE GOVERNOR DECLARES A STATE OF EMERGENCY – Gov. Healey declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts due to the "rapidly rising numbers of migrant families arriving in Massachusetts in need of shelter and services and a severe lack of shelter availability in the state."

"State employees and our partners have been miracle workers throughout this crisis – going above and beyond to support families and using every tool at their disposal to expand shelter capacity by nearly 80 percent in the last year," said Healey. "But in recent months, demand has increased to levels that our emergency shelter system cannot keep up with, especially as the number of families leaving shelters has dwindled due to a lack of affordable housing options and barriers to securing work."

Healey continued, "I am declaring a state of emergency in Massachusetts and urging my partners in the federal government to take the action we need to address this crisis by streamlining the work authorization process and passing comprehensive immigration reform. Many of the new arrivals to our state desperately want to work, and we have historic workforce demands across all industries. I am also calling on all of our partners – from cities and towns to the faith community - philanthropic organizations and human service providers – to rise to this challenge and do whatever you can to help us meet this moment."

The Healey administration also urged landlords, houses of worship, universities, businesses and private residents to open their facilities, homes and businesses to help house immigrants.

"This is not a crisis that our family shelter system was designed to handle," said Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll. "For months now, state government and our providers have been doing the work of stretching the system as far as it can safely go. But we really need to bring more people into this work to make it a true team effort. If you have an extra room or suite in your home, please consider hosting a family. Safe housing and shelter is our most pressing need."

Meanwhile, the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance condemned what it calls "the Biden administration's failure to properly secure the southern border and the Healey administration for being complacent."

"Immigration should not be politicalized but the Biden administration is either playing politics or we are watching a historic failure in leadership," said Paul Craney, spokesman for Massachusetts Fiscal

Continued on page 14

COMMENTARY

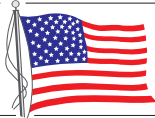
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Roll up for the Docent Tour!

Our View Of The Times



Somerville's got a lot of great history. That we all know. Going all the way back to the Pre-Revolutionary War days and then some.

Thanks to the fine folks at the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission and the Somerville Museum, we can all join in on seeking out and exploring some of the incredible historical sites that exist within our immediate environs.

Their docent program provides guided tours of three of the most prominent and historically intriguing sites in the city.

The Prospect Hill Tower stands at the site of American fortifications during the Revolutionary war and it also served as a training facility during the Civil War. The monument itself was designed by Ernest W. Bailey and built in 1904.

Volunteer docents will guide you to the

top of the tower where you can take in the breathtaking view of the surrounding city.

First built for use as a windmill by John Mallet in the early 1703 or 1704, the Old Powder House was sold to the colonial government of Massachusetts for use as a gunpowder magazine in 1747. It is the oldest stone building in Massachusetts.

Milk Row Cemetery is a historic cemetery on Somerville Avenue and School

Street. Established in 1804 on land donated by Samuel Tufts, it is the city's oldest cemetery.

The Docent Tours are packed with fascinating information about these special historical treasures. Tours are ongoing now.

Go to www.somervillema.gov/historicpreservation or <http://somervillemuseum.org> to learn more and get prepared for a truly historical experience.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

online at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/2023-municipal-firefighter-examination>.

The city's **Economic Development Division** is hosting two virtual community conversations on **Thursday, August 17**: one at 9:00 a.m. and one at 6:00 p.m. Hear about outdoor dining fee structures from around the region and share your thoughts and concerns about what a fair outdoor dining license fee structure would look like in Somerville. Learn more and attend at somervillema.gov/outdoordining.

A full sit-down **Senior Picnic** has been rescheduled for **Thursday, September 14**, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at **Trum Field**. For any questions and to get a new ticket, call the **Somerville Council on Aging** at 617-625-6600 ext. 2319.

Somerville's **Urban Forestry Committee and collaborators** are developing ways to celebrate our hard-working city trees. If you want to join in helping, you can **Adopt-A-Tree**. Look for colorful "Adopt me!" tags on newly planted trees in your neighborhood. Scan the QR code on the tag or visit tinyurl.com/somervilletree to go through the steps to adopt the tree.

Name it, water it, love it. You can even receive an adoption certificate available in many languages. Watering is the most important thing you can do to help a newly planted tree. They require 15-20 gallons of water each week between May-October, or even more during hot summer months.

The **Somerville Mobile Farmers Market** is open for the season, selling fresh, local produce **through October 28**. The market schedule is as follows: **Thursdays**: 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.; Clarendon Hill Towers (1372 Broadway), **Fridays**: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Council on Aging/SCALE

(167 Holland St.), 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.; East Somerville Community School (50 Cross St.). Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; Mystic Housing Development (25B Memorial Rd., at the playground). The market accepts cash, debit, credit, SNAP, WIC Farmers Market Coupons, and Senior Farmers Market Coupons. All are welcome. To learn more, visit: somervillema.gov/farmersmarket.

SCOA Knitting Group takes place **Tuesday, August 22** from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. at their **Holland Street Center**. If you are looking to learn how to knit, rekindle your love of knitting, or knit

Continued on page 15

FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's
Olio
#885

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

1. Which Simple Minds song was featured in the film *The Breakfast Club*?

2. What movie starred Michael Jackson?

3. In which war was the novel *For Whom The Bell Tolls* set?

4. Who wrote the theme for *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*?

5. The 1969 song *Pinball Wizard* is by which band?

6. What Daft Punk song featured Pharrell Williams and Nile Rodgers?
7. In boxing, what is the top weight allowed a flyweight?

8. How many wings does a bee have?

9. What American designer was born as Ralph Lifshitz?

10. What type of creature was Jerry in *Tom and Jerry*?

11. How much did MrBeast spend on his *Squid Game* Youtube video?

12. What is Andy Capp's wife called?

Answers on page 10

The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. Americans, on average, eat 18 acres of pizza every day.
2. Pound cake originally included a pound of all of its ingredients.

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD
BACK TO SCHOOL

- ACROSS
1. Medical school entry requirement, acr.

5. Atlas image

8. Hula dancer's necklace

11. German money

12. Ready for picking

13. Nerd

15. Like many Brothers Grimm stories

16. Month of Purim

17. Some exams

18. Laptop and books container

20. Fastens a fly

21. Licorice-like herb

22. Teacher's favorite

23. Like hot lava

26. Cassava, pl.

30. Chapter in history

31. Deadly

34. DEA agent

35. Second person singular past of "do," archaic

37. Greet, to a dog

38. Be in harmony

39. Inwardly

40. Opposite of pluralism

42. Even, to a poet

43. Academic planners

45. High predecessor

47. Passé

48. Barnyard honker

50. Rooftop contraption

52. Meal container

55. Emerald or aquamarine, chemically speaking

56. Trans-Siberian Railroad city

57. Venus de Milo's are missing

59. Plural of #51 Down

60. Comments from prompt box

61. Do like Ella Fitzgerald

62. PE in school

63. Make a choice

64. Piece of cake

CROSSWORD														
1	2	3	4			5	6	7			8	9	10	
11					12					13	14			
15					16					17				
	18			19						20				
			21					22						
23	24	25						26				27	28	29
30				31		32	33			34				
35			36			37				38				
39					40				41			42		
43				44					45		46			
			47				48	49						
	50	51				52					53	54		
55						56					57			58
59						60					61			
62						63					64			

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Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

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

4. Tabby's mate

5. King with a golden touch

6. Rapidly

7. ____ up, to become more cheerful

8. Spring

9. Morays

10. Abdominal pain cause, acr.

12. Plunder

13. Dirty one

14. One of 3 Rs in grade school

19. Genuflected

22. Letter-writing friend

23. M in LMC, educationally speaking

24. Circular gasket

25. Big Dipper's visible shape

26. Biblical gift-givers

27. Propelled a boat

28. Angler's basket

29. Part of an act
32. Rare bills

33. Chewbacca's sidekick

36. Word in thesaurus, e.g.

38. Mennonite's cousin

40. Gym class prop

41. Art class cover ups

44. Old fashioned contests at dawn

46. Lower value, as in currency

48. Plug a pipe, e.g. (2 words)

49. Beginning of ailment

50. Exceedingly

51. Bob of boxing world

52. Bonkers

53. Shamu, e.g.

54. Dec. holiday

55. Capture

58. Porky's or Petunia's home
- Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Somerville Urban Design Commission discusses plans for two properties

By Khoa Tong

The Urban Design Commission met to discuss plans for 720-722 Broadway and 53 Chester St. on Tuesday, August 8.

Christopher Vance, principal architect for Vance Architects, presented his second submission of the 720-722 Broadway project in continuation of his prior submission in the last meeting.

The plan aims to create a new building on the street with renovations to Lyndell's bakery and creating residential space on the elevated floors. This construction will also give Lyndell's a new design with increased commercial space such as outdoor seating.

Vance's new presentation for the meeting only featured minor changes to his previous presentation, addressing concerns of lim-

ited space on the sidewalk from the commission.

Andrew Arbaugh, member of the commission, voiced his concerns with the property's green score being reliant on a single tree. Green score was an issue brought up in the prior meeting with Vance explaining that he is looking into a plan with multiple trees being planted on the sidewalk and the property. Arbaugh suggested that he create another landscape plan that does not feature a single tree being the green score.

"You're putting so much weight on that one tree and I don't think that's sensible given the condition you've put that tree in," said Arbaugh.

Cheri Ruane, member of the commission, followed up on the point and questioned the place-

ment of a green space for residence next to a dumpster. Vance explained that the fourth floor of the building will also contain a green space for residents, but Arbaugh stated that much of the ground floor space is being wasted on non-required designs like a few parking spots.

Commission member Deborah Fennick said that the plan is an improvement from their last review but that the building should be brought down in elevation and utilize more of the space to feel more friendly in the neighborhood.

Ruane and Arbaugh ended the discussion by expressing their disappointment with a lack of change to the landscape plan and hope to see Vance Architect's landscape architect present the plans in the future.



Future plans for the property at 720-722 Broadway and 53 Chester St. was discussed at the latest meeting of the city's Urban Design Commission. — Photo by Bobbie Toner

The commission concluded with a 4 to 0 vote to move forward with Vance's new presentation and will have Vance return for their next meeting to discuss the matter further.

The meeting continued with

discussion of 53 Chester St. presented by Peter Quinn, president of Peter Quinn Architects, and Katya Podsiadlo, founding partner of Verdant Landscape Architecture.

The site on Continued on page 13

Dorothy's Corner

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



Shrimp and Scallop Scampi

Here's a great dish that can be put together in under 30 minutes once all the items are prepared in advance. I originally made this dish with shrimp, scallops and lobster, and it's one of the most requested dishes for dinner for family and friends.

- 4 Tablespoons Butter
- 1/4 Cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 6 Garlic Cloves, finely minced
- 1/2 Cup White Wine, (Sauvignon Blanc) or Chicken Broth
- 1/8 Teaspoon Red Pepper Flakes or 3 Calabrian Chili's, crushed
- 12 Large Shrimp, shelled and deveined
- 12 Sea Scallops, remove the connector muscle
- Lemon Zest from 1 lemon
- 1/2 Lemon Juiced
- 3/4 Teaspoon Salt, plus more to taste
- 1/2 Teaspoon Black Pepper, freshly ground, plus more to taste
- 1/2 Cup Chopped Parsley

1 lb. Linguine

Fill a large pot of water, cover and place on the stovetop over medium heat. Place a 12" skillet on the stove top, add the butter and oil and melt over medium/low heat. Once the butter is fully melted, add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Make sure to turn the heat up on the pot of water and bring to a boil.

Turn up the heat to medium/high for the skillet, add the wine or broth and red pepper flakes or chili's, reduce by half. That will take about 5 minutes. Lower the heat to medium, season the scallops and shrimp with 3/4 tsp. salt and 1/2 tsp. pepper and add them to the skillet. Cook for about 3 minutes. Salt the boiling water and add the linguine and cook it to the package instructions.

*Note, it is important for the sauce to be ready before the pasta is cooked so the pasta will not stick together.

Once the scallops and shrimp have cooked for 3 minutes, turn all the seafood in the skillet and cook for



an additional 2-3 minutes. Add the lemon zest and juice of the lemon. Taste the sauce and adjust the seasoning if needed. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Once the pasta is cooked, drain it and add to a large bowl and pour the seafood and sauce over the pasta. Add the chopped parsley and toss until the pasta is fully coated. *Note, if you de-


cide to add lobster, cook it ahead of time and have it chopped in bite sized pieces and add the cooked lobster right after you remove the skillet from the heat. This will heat the lobster through without over cooking it.

Serves 4-5.

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

LEGAL NOTICES

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



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

THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LEGAL NOTICE - HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC)

The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will hold a public meeting and public hearings on **Tuesday, September 5, 2023** 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 107 of the Acts of 2022, 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://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2424212465884370267>

Webinar ID: 443-921-971

TO CALL IN

Phone Number: 1 (631) 992-3221

Access Code: 699-441-199

ALL OF THE CASES ADVERTISED BELOW HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING COMPONENT

Determinations of Historic Significance (STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)


HPC.DMO 2023.17 – 58-60 Beacon Street
Applicant: Niranjana Gawli
Owner: Samuel Perlman
The Applicant seeks to demolish a building constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.

Determinations Of Preferably Preserved (STEP 2 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)

HPC.DMO 2023.15 – 45 Alpine Street
Applicant: David Kogan
Owner: Same as Applicant
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.

8/16/23 The Somerville Times



NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING
Removal of Public Shade Trees
City of Somerville

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 87, the City of Somerville will hold a **virtual public shade tree hearing on Thursday, August 31, 2023 at 12:00 p.m.** using GotoWebinar software to consider the removal of the following public shade tree(s):

- **51 Prospect Street on Newton Street**
1. One Siberian elm- 9" in diameter, fair condition

Tree growing out of fence on property line is in conflict with a planned Eversource substation project.

The trees identified above have been posted for public inspection. In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 87, any objections to the removal of any of these trees must be submitted in writing to the Tree Warden prior to or at this public hearing. Documents may be sent via email to: trees@somervillema.gov, or mailed to: 1 Franey Rd., Somerville, MA. 02145.

Pursuant to Chapter Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this Public Shade Tree Hearing will be conducted via remote participation. A recording of this hearing will be available upon request to trees@somervillema.gov.

TO USE A COMPUTER
Registration URL: <https://tinyurl.com/5b2pa78s>

TO CALL IN
United States: +1 (415) 655-0052
Access code: 960-614-877
The Somerville Times 8/16, 8/23

8/16/23 The Somerville Times



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
RFP # 24-09

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

High Speed Mass Notification System


A request for proposals (RFP) 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, August 16, 2023**. Sealed proposals will be received at the above office until: **2:00 pm, Thursday, September 7, 2023**. The Chief Procurement Officer reserves the right to reject any or all proposals 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.

Felisa Garate
Procurement Analyst
617-625-6600 x3406

8/16/23 The Somerville Times

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POPLAR STREET PUMP STATION PROJECT:
10 POPLAR STREET, SOMERVILLE, MA

P-01 Furnish Equipment & Services for
Submersible Solids-Handling Pumps

CITY OF SOMERVILLE
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CONTRACTOR

City of Somerville and its CMAR, MWH Constructors RFP for Contractor services procured in accordance with current MGL Chapter 30, § 39M for Construction Materials (without Labor) over \$50,000 inclusive of all amendments. Includes all equipment and services to furnish complete submersible solids-handling pumps. MANDATORY pre-bid sessions scheduled for **Wednesday, August 23, 2023** at MWH on-site trailer, 10 Poplar St. Times to be coordinated with individual bidders.

RFP will be available on **Wednesday, August 16, 2023**. Project to be electronically bid via www.projectdog.com, Projectdog Code/Project #857409. Contractor RFP submissions will be due **Wednesday, August 30, 2023 at 2PM**. Project contact: David Rogers, email: David.Rogers@mwhconstructors.com, Cell: 978-618-0177.

8/16/23 The Somerville Times

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www.TheSomervilleTimes.com

Winter Hill School CONT. FROM PG 5

deteriorate the brick masonry and timber structural elements of the building.”

“Again, at the clock tower, we do not recommend any “no-build alternative” or additional delay to address the serious structural defects, resulting from ongoing and persistent water infiltration, that are destroying the clock tower. We believe a decision to rebuild or demolish the clocktower down to the adjacent sloping roof level should be the first order of business. A one-year timeframe is recommended for these repairs to be completed.”

“Overall, the exterior masonry façade is in fair-to-poor condition with various sections of deteriorated or failed mortar joints, cracked or spalled brick masonry units, abandoned mechanical anchors, failed and/or missing sealant joints, and areas of shifted masonry. Several of these locations may be a life safety concern for occupants and pedestrians walking around the building.”

From on page 8

Ms. Cam's

Olio

Answers

1. Don't You (Forget About Me)	7. 112 lbs.
2. Moonwalker	8. Four
3. Spanish Civil War	9. Ralph Lauren
4. Paul Anka	10. Mouse
5. The Who	11. 3.5 million
6. Get Lucky	12. Flo

Somerville Traffic Commission tackles variety of issues

By Ana Celerier

On August 10, 2023, the Somerville Traffic Commission held a meeting to discuss requests for accessible parking, requests for establishments of fire lanes, and finally, requests for curb use changes and a few other changes to make school arrival and dismissal safer and more effective for the Healey and Edgerly schools. First on the agenda were two requests for accessible parking spaces, one at 303 Washington St. and another at 23 Melvin St. Adrienne Pomeroy, a coordinator with the city of Somerville, was in attendance to speak on the matter.

Pomeroy stated that she reviewed both applications for the spaces and recommended their approval. She mentioned, however, that she did have one note for future conversation: If a space is granted and for some reason not being used or somebody moves or, unfortunately, passes away. Then the city reserves the right to turn that space back into a residential parking non-accessible parking spot, and in the case of 303 Washington St. A family occupies at least one or more buildings along that stretch of Washington St., and somebody did pass away, and then another family member whose name it was not in began to use it.

Pomeroy clarified that this request presented before the commission is the current application to bring that information current but that this situation does bring up a sort of a bigger thought process for herself around policy, which she stated is something that can certainly be explored at another time. Ultimately the commission voted on both applications, and they were approved.

Next was a request to establish a fire lane on Nashua St. from the corner of Richardson St. down the odd side in a southerly direction for a distance of 20 feet. As well as a request to establish a fire lane on Sycamore St. from

the corner of Pembroke St. down the even side in front of #74 Sycamore St. in a northerly direction for a distance of 20 feet. The fire chief made these requests due to difficulty making turning movements. The commission voted to approve both requests.

Finally, there were two requests for curb use changes for the Healey School and Edgerly Education Center. Greg Hanafin, transportation planner for the city of Somerville, was in attendance to present on the matter. For the Healey School, he noted that the proposed permanent changes before the commission were already temporary changes that had been in effect for almost two years. Hanafin said that while the Healey School playground and parking lot were under construction, there were some temporary changes to the arrival and dismissal plan at the school and that following the completion of the construction, he met with the school administration, and they expressed that they felt that the temporary changes were working well and created a safer condition for the students and they requested for them to remain permanent.

Hanafin shared a presentation with those in attendance regarding each of the proposed changes. Regarding Meacham St. between Edgar Ave. and Century St./Ash Ave., there is a request to restrict traffic to one-way westbound only between 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, September through June.

Hanafin noted that what is normally a two-way St. was temporarily restricted to one-way, allowing vehicles to travel westbound, and this reduced the potential conflict of vehicles coming eastbound and getting in the way of students getting picked up and being dropped off in the morning.

Regarding the curb on the North side of Meacham St. between Edgar Ave. and Ash Ave., there is a request to convert resi-



A wide array of agenda items were addressed at the Somerville Traffic Commission's most recent meeting.

— Photo by Bobbie Toner

dent permit parking to active arrival and dismissal only between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, September through June, and resident permit parking at all other times. In addition, regarding the curb on the South side of Meacham St. between Edgar Ave. and Century St., there is a request to convert resident permit parking to active arrival and dismissal only between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, September through June, and resident permit parking at all other times.

Hanafin continued his presentation by requesting to prohibit the right turn from Edgar Ave. to Meacham St. between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, September through June, except for school staff.

Finally, Hanafin presented a new proposed change that had yet to be previously temporarily in effect like the others. Hanafin commented that the school administration requested that the curb on the north side of Meacham between Meacham St. between Edgar Ave. and the Healey School parking lot be converted into approximately 65 feet of no parking 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

and to school bus parking only 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and resident permit parking at all other times.

He commented that the school administration expressed a desire to have this for school bus parking because they've been finding that during arrival and dismissal, vehicles are parking in this space even though it's signed as no parking. The school believes that having it designated as for school bus parking will reduce the illegal parking here and also create a space for their buses. He also expressed a request that the advertising period be waived for these items so that the changes can be implemented before school begins at the end of August. The Traffic Commission approved all Requests.

Hanafin also presented on the proposed curb changes to the Edgerly Education Center, which is in response to the movement of students from the Winter Hill School to Edgerly Education Center for the upcoming school year. Edgerly Education Center previously did not have students as it was a school administration and city staff building. Hanafin stated that regarding the curb on

the Northside of Otis St. from approximately 33 feet West of Cross St. to approximately 138 feet West of Cross St., there is a request to convert 105 feet of resident permit parking to active arrival and dismissal only between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, September through June, and resident permit parking at all other times. In addition, regarding the curb on the West side of Cross St. from approximately 32 feet north of Otis St. to approximately 108 feet north of Otis St., there is a request to convert 76 feet of MBTA bus stop to active arrival and dismissal only between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, September through June, and two-hour parking except by permit at all other times. As well as regarding the curb on the West side of Cross St. from approximately 108 feet north of Otis St. to approximately 168 feet north of Otis St.

Request to convert 60 feet of unregulated parking to MBTA bus stop. Hanafin commented that the city has been in communication with the MBTA and gotten the ok to relocate the bus stop to the

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.

Somerville Media Center to cease operations at 90 Union Square

Somerville Community Access Television, doing business as Somerville Media Center, has been ordered by Mayor Katjana Ballantyne to cease operations in its facility at 90 Union Square and vacate the building by August 31, 2023.

SMC will leave its present location at the City's request and is negotiating a commercial lease for another location in Somerville to rebuild SMC's television studios, its internet radio station Boston Free Radio, and youth and adult education spaces as soon as possible. In the meantime, we are working with our partners to find temporary locations for our youth program, our producers, our gallery, and all the art and

media our members produce.

SMC started in 1983 as the first community access television station in Massachusetts. Thirty-eight years ago, at the direction of then-Mayor Eugene Brune, the City of Somerville renovated the former firehouse in the center of Union Square to create television studios to be run by the community. SMC was the site of the first national teleconference for the deaf, the first cable access lesbian soap opera, and some of the earliest panels on transgender youth. It was also the starting point for such treasured recording artists as Tracy Chapman, and it remains the home of the longest continuously produced access show in the United States, Dead Air

Live. We are now SMC, with an internet radio station (Boston Free Radio) and a thriving youth program.

The Board of the Somerville Media Center wants to thank the entire community for its support over the last 40 years. We're building to make sure we are there for you for the next 40.

For questions beyond those below, contact: Jesse Buckley, Board President BoardPresident@somervillemedia.org.

Frequent Questions & Answers

Where is SMC moving?

We are currently working to find a new location in Somerville to support our programs and will announce further details as soon

as possible.

Will SMC close?

No. We anticipate that many of our services will remain available to the public. We expect that Channel 3 (SCATV) and Boston Free Radio (BFR) will continue broadcasting. We are working to determine the interim availability of our other services to our members, including after-school programming, community meeting space, arts gallery, and internet access for unhoused people.

What happens to my SMC membership?

We will extend your membership to compensate for the time in-studio you have lost. If we cannot give you access to a studio

for six weeks, we will extend your membership for six weeks.

What happens to the youth program if you have no facility? SMC will leave its present location at the City's request and is negotiating a commercial lease for another location in Somerville to rebuild SMC's television studios, but this will take time. We're working on a temporary location for the youth program.

How can I help?

This is a big change for all of us, so that you're willing to stick with us is really appreciated. Sign up for our newsletter and we'll get updates out as soon as we have them. The link to sign up is at the bottom of somervillemedia.org.

LETTER 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.

Dear Editor,

As many parents will know, affordable childcare is difficult to find in Massachusetts. Middlesex County is the third most expensive county in the U.S. for childcare. Governor Maura Healey herself stated that childcare was a crisis in her inaugural speech early this year. But on Wednesday, August 9, Governor Healey slashed funds in the FY24 budget that would provide higher wages to our early childcare educators, undermining her very own goal of making childcare more accessible. Governor Healey vetoed \$1 million funding for Head Start State Supplemental Grants and slashed \$35 million salary rate funding for center-based early educators in programs that work with low-income and at-risk children. These unconscionable cuts undermine the value and respect for educators serving our youngest learn-

ers and would directly hit the wallets of those who are most deserving of more.

At The Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS), we serve over 200 young children and their families in Somerville each year through our Head Start program. Head Start provides no-cost early education and comprehensive child and family services to more than 10,000 of our Commonwealth's most vulnerable young children. Head Start serves families earning under the Federal Poverty Guidelines, currently just \$27,750 for a family of four. Our programs ensure that not only are children able to receive an education that sets them up for future success, but that their families are able to find affordable housing and employment, creating the stability children and families need to thrive. But like many other early childcare programs, we are struggling to retain teachers, significantly reducing the number of

families we're able to serve.

The early education workforce shortage has hit programs hard. As of the Massachusetts Head Start Association's most recent workforce survey in April 2023, Head Start programs are already operating at an 18% staff vacancy rate. CAAS, like other programs throughout the state, is struggling to find and retain teachers. Decades of underfunding in existing state and federal funds have caused stagnant Head Start staff salaries that fail to meet the needs of educators. In fact, 67% of statewide programs say that staff are leaving their programs for higher wages elsewhere, making early childhood education more expensive for families across Massachusetts. Head Start educators are highly qualified and degreed, and yet classroom teachers earn just \$39,520 annually on average. Head Start State Supplemental Grants go directly to supporting this most basic need – over 90% of

grant funds go to wage and salary support for Head Start staff.

Head Start is also facing a crisis in Washington, DC. The US House Appropriations Committee has recommended a 6.25% cut for Head Start in the federal FY24 budget, which would devastate Head Start programs, forcing layoffs and elimination of services for vulnerable children and families. This additional cut by Governor Healey would add devastation to devastation, forcing painful decisions at our program to eliminate services in order to pay staff closer to what they deserve.

We remain grateful for the legislature's investments in our workforce in their FY24 budget. These cuts cannot stand.

Sincerely,

The Community Action Agency of Somerville

Report: Vacant East Somerville storefront becomes a welcoming, accessible pop-up space for over 350 visitors

A report released last week by CultureHouse, a non-profit organization dedicated to working with communities to transform underutilized spaces into vibrant social infrastructure, shows CultureHouse East Somerville, a month-long community pop-up on Broadway was welcomed by the community and increased accessibility and engagement while supporting economic revitalization and boosting commercial vibrancy with over 352 visitors, 22 community events, and more.

The CultureHouse East Somerville Impact Report highlights and celebrates the diverse community of East Somerville. The pop-up space was created in partnership with East Somerville Main Streets and ran from May 3 to June 4 in a vacant storefront at 20 Broadway. The report also highlights that the pop-up:

- Created a safe and welcoming space (352 people visited the space)
- 352 visitors, including local, regional, and international visitors - and tourists - visited the space. * 52% increase in visitors who were women, and a 3-fold increase in Asian visitors * Families and older adults were active and frequent visitors.
- Promoted accessibility - 45% of visitors chose to walk to the pop-up with programming in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.
- Boosted commercial vibrancy with 22 events hosted by local partners - including workshops featuring the City of Somerville,

local businesses, non-profits, community organizations, and local artists and creatives. 63% said they made new connections at the pop-up.

Business owners, community members, and visitors (and their pets!) welcomed the pop-up, and many, particularly older adults and families with their children, were frequent visitors, not only for the programming but for the space and community it created. The owner of the vacant storefront was not sure what to expect when a lease was signed for it to become CultureHouse East Somerville - and certainly did not imagine new flooring, flexible furniture, plants, increased foot traffic and vibrancy, and offers to rent the space.

"There's no doubt many of our communities continue to face the economic and social impacts of the pandemic," said Aaron Greiner, Executive Director at CultureHouse. "East Somerville had a 20% commercial vacancy rate, and this was the impetus to the community pop-up space to foster community and boost commercial vibrancy - and we're excited to see that the community not only welcomed the pop-up but used it as an opportunity to connect with each other, learn about local businesses, and want more of it. We are so grateful to contribute to show how existing and underutilized spaces can be part of a solution to give businesses in the region a much-needed boost and, most



importantly, foster community."

"CultureHouse East Somerville allowed us to gain insight into how the main street can be improved through investment and fostering connection," said Lindsay Allen, Executive Director at East Somerville Main Streets. "We look forward to referencing and sharing the findings of the impact report to help inform strategies to enliven our neighborhood and promote a culturally rich and diverse commercial center."

The report is intended to serve as a resource for city planners, business owners, and community organizations looking to revitalize their communities by improving main streets and utilizing vacant spaces. The CultureHouse East Somerville impact report provides

recommendations on creating welcoming and accessible community spaces, developing intentional partnerships, activating underutilized community resources with diverse programming to increase and promote accessibility to downtowns.

On Tuesday, August 22 at 6:30 p.m. CultureHouse, and East Somerville Main Streets will be hosting a meeting with the community of East Somerville to share the details of the impact report and additional suggestions for developing vibrant cultural spaces that foster a welcoming and accessible environment for the community. Learn more about this community meeting at www.culturehouse.cc/projects/east-somerville.

About CultureHouse

CultureHouse is a nonprofit

organization dedicated to improving livability in local communities by transforming unused spaces into vibrant social infrastructure. They create lasting change through community engagement, building designs, operating experimental pop-up spaces, and impact reports detailing the project's next steps. Learn more at www.culturehouse.cc/eastsomerville.

About East Somerville Main Streets

East Somerville Main Streets is a nonprofit organization that is committed to improving the lives of the East Somerville community through strengthening the commercial center, raising awareness of the rich culture, and enhancing social connection. Learn more at <https://www.eastsomervillemainstreets.org/> [10].

Urban Design Commission CONT. FROM PG 9

53 Chester St. currently has a building that is set to be destroyed and replaced with a new building with a commercial space on the ground floor and a handful of residential units above it. The plan will have four floors in total and also parking spaces for residents as well.

Podsiadlo also explained that

the sidewalk will also contain patches of soil, trees and hedges to not only maintain the green score of the property but to also provide more vibrance for the walkway.

The plan also provides a stronger sidewalk link between the commercial zone of Elm St. and the residential areas of Chester St. and Herbet St.

Arbaugh made a comment regarding landscaping of the site, suggesting that there could be more variety in the green life being planted but that the actual plan is good and proportionally correct for him. Podsiadlo explained that his idea could be looked into but it also depends on the green life in the surround-

ing area.

Fennick suggested that the building should have a higher elevation on the commercial space to give it more emphasis for the business as well as having more verticality to the overall building to match the neighboring residential buildings. Quinn agreed and they

discussed different alterations of the design to fit her ideas.

The meeting concluded with the commission voting 3 to 0 in favor of approving their design.

To find out more about the Urban Design Commission, visit <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/urban-design-commission>.

Outdoor dining license fees virtual community meetings, August 17

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the City of Somerville invite you to a virtual community meeting to discuss a new fee structure for outdoor dining licenses. This year, the city plans to implement a new Use of Public Space Fee for outdoor dining licenses. Expanded outdoor dining has been a success of the past few years, adding vibrancy to the squares of Somerville, but using public space for commercial purposes also puts new demands on sidewalks and streets.

Prior to 2020, fees for outdoor dining parklets were in the \$1000s. The city did not charge fees in 2020, 2021, or 2022 to promote safe outdoor gatherings and support local businesses during the pandemic. In 2023, Somerville only reintroduced administrative fees, when many other communities reinstituted full fees for outdoor dining license holders.

The city’s Economic Development Division is hosting two virtual community conversations to help inform the Use of Public Space Fee’s structure and specific rate. At these sessions, city staff will walk through the issues at hand and examples of outdoor dining fee structures from around the region.

Join one of two sessions on Thursday, August 17, on Zoom to share thoughts and concerns about what a fair outdoor dining license fee structure would look like. The morning session is from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. and the evening session is from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. These meetings will be offered in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, with additional interpretation available upon request.

A follow-up meeting is planned for September to share the proposed license fee structure for additional review. To learn more and find the meeting links, go to somervillema.gov/outdoordining.

Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 6

Alliance. “While Washington’s dysfunction may seem far removed, their failures are now starting to have a very real and tangible negative impact in Massachusetts.”

Craney continued, “It’s no secret Gov. Maura Healey likes to travel out of state, perhaps it is time [for] the governor to take a trip to the southern border to see firsthand the open southern border crisis. Without recognizing the severity of the problem and reasons for it, which is an open border and unaccountable president, it will persist by draining resources from Massachusetts and its taxpayers.”

FREE COLLEGE TUITION FOR KIDS RAISED BY NON-PARENTS INCLUDING GRANDPARENTS (H 1257, S 819) – A bill heard by the Higher Education Committee would provide tuition and fee waivers for any Bay State resident attending a Massachusetts public state university and who lives with a grandparent or other family member, other than their parents.

“The bill would provide much-needed financial relief for young adults pursuing higher education in the commonwealth who were raised by family members other than their parents – such as grandparents,” said Senate sponsor Sen. Julian Cyr (D-Truro).

“Foster children under Department of Children and Families (DCF) care have been entitled to a tuition-free education at state-schools for several years,” said House sponsor Rep. Paul Donato (D-Medford). “With 35,000 grandparents raising their grandchildren throughout the commonwealth, this legislation will allow students being raised by their grandparents to have an equal opportunity to a tuition-free education as their peers in DCF care.”

FREE TUITION FOR SENIORS OVER 60 (H 1274) – Another measure before the Higher Education Committee would establish a pilot reimbursement program for Massachusetts public higher education institutions providing tuition and fee waivers to senior citizens above the age of 60. The program would apply, subject to availability and a maximum of four courses per academic

years, to qualifying seniors who are enrolled in undergraduate programs, summer sessions, evening classes or any specific higher education courses between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024.

“The state’s public higher education institutions currently offer waivers for qualifying seniors, but the program is poorly utilized,” said sponsor GOP House Minority Leader Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). “This bill creates a mechanism for reimbursing these institutions and establishes a stable baseline funding level for future budget cycles. The goal is to encourage more seniors to take classes while also ensuring that the state’s colleges and universities are properly compensated for lost revenues.”

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“Former Gov. Charlie Baker had no authority to mandate the experimental COVID shots and deny religious accommodations to these state troopers. Let us never forget this insanity. This is a great victory for these troopers and more public servants must also be reinstated and given back pay.” — *Liberty Counsel Founder and Chairman Mat Staver on an arbitrator’s decision that seven state troopers who were suspended in 2021 for refusing the COVID-19 shot for religious reasons must be reinstated and receive retroactive pay and earned seniority.*

“This significant expansion of the [program] will make electric vehicles more affordable and accessible for residents of all income levels. Residents will now be able to get their rebates the day they buy their car, instead of waiting for the funds to come in. And income-eligible folks will now be able to get additional rebates, including for used vehicles. This is a great development in our efforts toward an equitable clean energy transition.” — *Gov. Healey announcing changes to the Massachusetts Offers Rebates for Electric Vehicles Program which provides rebates for the purchase or lease of battery electric and fuel cell electric vehicles.*

“Healthcare is a right not a privilege. Medicare for All ensures we affirm that belief through policies that make

it true, in practice, for all of our families.” — *Boston City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo on the council’s passage of his resolution in support of state legislation that would establish Medicare for all in Massachusetts.*

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 August 7-11, the House met for a total of 30 minutes while the Senate met for a total of 13 minutes.

Mon. August 7	House 11:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. Senate 11:14 a.m. to 11:23 a.m.
Tues. August 8	No House session No Senate session
Wed. August 9	No House session No Senate session
Thurs. August 10	House 11:04 a.m. to 11:14 a.m. Senate 11:03 a.m. to 11:07 a.m.
Fri. August 11	No House session No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com

Tufts street transportation safety improvements community meeting, August 30

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Ward 1 City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin, and city staff invite you to a virtual community meeting about transportation safety improvements on Tufts Street.

The city is reconstructing Tufts Street and its sidewalks as part of the citywide Pavement and Sidewalk Management Program.

This presents an opportunity to redesign the street to make it safer for all users. Tufts Street is a residential street that serves as an important connection to the new East Somerville Green Line station. It’s also designated as a Neighborway in the Somerville Bicycle Network Plan, so the new design will prioritize traffic-calming elements to reduce speeds and discourage cut-through traffic. Join this community meeting to learn more, share your experiences using Tufts Street, and discuss what changes you’d like included in its redesign.

The city will continue community engagement through the fall, share a conceptual design for public feedback this winter, and present final designs next spring. Construction is expected to begin in mid-2024 and continue through 2025.

The meeting will take place Wednesday, August 30, at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom. You can also take a 5-minute survey on the project website to help inform the street’s redesign. Learn more, take the survey, and find the virtual meeting link at somervillema.gov/tuftsstreet.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

with others, join their new knitting group. The first project will be learning to knit a potholder. All supplies, including yarn and needles will be provided. Please RSVP to Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317.

It’s time to fire things up with the **11th annual Ignite festival!** To celebrate Union Square’s sizzling food landscape, the **Somerville Arts Council** is issuing an open call to artists working in various genres this year’s Ignite Festival - an evening celebration of global culture and all things illuminated. The mission of Ignite is to showcase the depth and breadth of local talent through a global lens. They seek proposals for internationally themed performances and light installations/performances. Application Deadline: Sunday, August 27. Application: <https://forms.gle/TGiGsZpUZgB9qF5r6> Festival: **Saturday, September 30, 6:00 – 10:00 p.m.** (Rain date: Sunday, October 1) **Union Square, Somerville.** Questions? Email: somartscalls@gmail.com.

Join **Boynton Yards** and **Once Somerville** for the next free block party filled with live music, games, crafts, vendors, food trucks and cold drinks on **August 19.** Sip, nosh, shop, play, craft, and rock out with delicious food, talented vendors, and incredible artists from around the world. To RSVP for your free ticket, visit www.oncesomerville.com

East Somerville’s Summer Carnaval Block Party Series kicked off last month. These block parties will be held at **115 Broadway** (East Somerville Public Library) and on **Illinois Ave.** on **Sunday evenings once a month.** Enjoy live music,

food, and activities for the whole family. The next block parties take place August 20 and September 10.

Become a **crossing guard** and help keep our students safe. Training is provided, \$20.23 / hour, perfect attendance bonus, clothing allowance, uniforms provided, and paid snow days. Send your resume to careers@somervillema.gov or apply at somervillema.gov/careers.

Save the date, **Tuesday, September 19.** The **2023 Foodie Crawl** planning is in the works. Taste the world on Broadway in East Somerville and support East Somerville Main Streets.

Another event coming up is the **Somerville Greek Festival.** Enjoy delicious, authentic Greek food and pastry, dance under the big tent to live music and enjoy a cold beer or wine while taking in the excitement at the largest Greek food festival in town. The festival will run **September 8 and 9** from 12:00 to 11:00 p.m. and **Sunday, September 10** from 12:00 to 9:00 p.m. Plenty of free parking. The menu will be posted ahead of this event, with plenty of vegetarian options. The Somerville Greek Festival is an annual event of the **Dormition of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church**, 29 Central St., Somerville. and open to the general public. It is a major fundraiser which allows the community of faithful to continue to serve the Somerville community through philanthropy, liturgical services, classes, youth ministries and much more. Visit dormitionchurch.org.

Dilboy Pool, 110 Alewife Brook Parkway, is now open for the summer season. Pool

hours are Monday – Friday, 11:00 a.m. – 6:45 p.m., Saturday – Sunday, 11:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. Pool admission: Children – \$1. Adults – \$2. **Ginny Smithers Pool** at the Kennedy School, 5 Cherry St., summer hours Monday – Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Resident registration for summer swimming lessons opened on July 3. Non-resident opened on July 5 at 8:00 a.m. Limited spots are available. Visit somervillema.myrec.com.

The **City of Somerville’s annual Somer-MovieFest** returns this year with a series of seven family-friendly films being shown in parks around Somerville. Screenings begin at dusk. The next screening will be **Clueless, Thursday, August 17, 8:13 p.m., Seven Hills Park** (Somerville Community Path and Buena Vista Rd.).

Enjoy **free outdoor movie, popcorn, candy, and fun** at **The Block at Boynton Yards**, all summer long. **Friday Flicks Outdoor Movie Nights at Boynton Yards** will start at 7:00 p.m. with yard games and fun, followed by candy, popcorn, and movies once the sun sets. Bring a blanket and get ready for a fun-filled evening. **September 15: The Little Mermaid** (1995 version). Boynton Yards, 110 South Street.

The **Free 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 be used only during an emer-

gency. The program is targeted towards Somerville residents who live alone and are aged 65+, or those who are disabled and/or suffer from major medical issues at any age. Individuals living in apartment complexes or other facilities with maintenance staff are not eligible for this program. For more information, please contact **Debby Higgins** at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Don’t forget to visit **Somerville’s farmers markets.** Every **Wednesday through November 22, 12:00 – 6:00 p.m.** visit the **Davis Square Farmers Market**, across from **American Flatbread** at 44 Day St. Visit: www.massfarmersmarkets.org/davis. Every **Saturday through October 28, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**, the **Union Square Farmers Market** takes place at 66-70 Union Sq. visit: www.unionsquaremain.org/2023-fmseason.

Help sustain the growth of the **Come To The Table** meal by purchasing a **Somerville In Food** cookbook with proceeds going towards growing the program. Spearheaded by a former SHC employee and Come To The Table volunteer, the cookbook is a culmination of diverse dishes from local businesses and supporters. Purchase your cookbook to support our neighbors experiencing food insecurity: <https://fundraise.givesmart.com/e/Nx-mo2g?vid=y5o6>.

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.

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS:

Upcoming events:

Lockboxes for Seniors – The Free 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 be used only during an emergency. The program is targeted towards Somerville residents who live alone and are aged 65+, or those who are disabled and/or suffer from major medical issues at any age. Individuals living in apartment complexes or other facilities with maintenance staff are not eligible for this program. For more information, please contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

A Stroll Down Memory Lane – Wednesday, August 30th starting at 11:30 a.m. at the Holland Street Center. Join us for an afternoon of laughter and memories. The COA DJ, Hank, has created a memorable slide show highlighting our programs, events and adventures throughout the years! A special lunch will be served. \$5 per person. RSVP by call Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Knitting Group – Tuesday, August 22nd from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at our Holland Street Center. If you are looking to learn how to knit, rekindle your love of knitting, or knit with others, join us for our new knitting group. Our first project will be learning to knit a potholder. All supplies, including yarn and needles will be provided. RSVP to Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317.

De-Clutter Drop-in Sessions – Thursday, August 31st from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Holland Street Center. Thinking about joining the Somerville de-cluttering group but can't make a six-week commitment? Do you want to check in about clutter before the fall de-cluttering group commences? Look no further than the De-Clutter Drop-In Sessions. Both sessions are open to Somerville and Cambridge residents age 60 and over. For more information or to RSVP please call Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317.

Wednesday Bingo – August 16th at the Holland Street Center. Lunch at noon, Bingo to begin following lunch. RSVP to Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov

Paint Day – Wednesday, August 23rd starting at 1:30 p.m. at our Holland Street Center. We will be painting a bottle. Space is very limited. \$5 per person. RSVP to Debby Higgins at 617-

625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Line Dancing Returns! – Monday, August 21st and September 11th, 18th and 25th at 1:00pm. Six-week sessions. Join us for an afternoon of Line Dancing with Julie Kaufmann. RSVP to Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Bingo – Every Tuesday at the Ralph & Jenny Center starting at 10:00 a.m. Lunch available following Bingo. RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Bingo – Every Thursday at our Holland Street Center starting at 10:00 a.m. Lunch available following Bingo. RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Veteran's Group – Meets the 4th Tuesday of each month, August 22nd, at the Holland Street Center starting at 11:00 a.m. RSVP to Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or email dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Tech Open Hours – Tuesdays, August 22nd starting at 10:00 a.m. at the Holland Street Center. Bring your phones, computers, and tablets or borrow one from the COA. This is a drop-in style individual help to answer your technology questions and frustrations. RSVP to Molly Pagliuca at 781-823-9210 or email Molly at mpagliuca@somervillema.gov.

Music & Movement – Thursday, August 17th at 4:00 p.m. at the Holland Street Center. Join Steve as he plays guitar, sings and leads gentle movements. Just tapping your toe or singing along can help move your body in new ways. Being physically active is not just good for our bodies but it is also one of Mental Health America's 10 tools to building resiliency; or the ability to overcome obstacles and manage through tough times. This program is in person, pre-registration is required as space is limited. RSVP by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2300.

Tech Time with Tufts – Monday, August 28th at 1:00 p.m. in our Holland Street Center. Tufts University first year students will be joining our Tech Time Drop-in Hours. Students will provide drop-in style individual help to answer your technology questions and frustrations. Please RSVP to Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318.

Morning Movie Day – Friday, August 25th, 10:00 a.m. at the Holland Street Center. This month's film is Murder Mystery 2 starring Adam Sandler and Jennifer Aniston – Full-time detectives Nik and Audrey are struggling to get their private eye agency off the ground. They find themselves at the center of an international abduction when their

friend, Maharaja, is kidnapped at his own lavish wedding. Rated PG-13. Pizza will be served after the movie; \$2 per person. RSVP to Debby Higgins by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2321 or email Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov.

Virtual LGBTQIA+ Exercise Class – Thursdays, August 24th and 31st starting at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. RSVP by calling 617-625-6600, ext. 2300.

Friendly Caller Program - Looking for a way to practice social distancing but remain connected to other people? Look no further than the Somerville Council on Aging's Friendly Phone Caller program. We have many wonderful volunteers who are waiting to give you a call. Whether you are looking to make a new friend or would just like a friendly chat to look forward to every week, this program has you covered. Call Natasha Naim at 617-625-6600, ext. 2317 to learn more about the program and to sign up

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.

The Council on Aging's Senior Transportation Program

The COA is offering free taxi rides to Somerville residents over the age of 60. Rides are available to go to the grocery store, farmer's market, and pharmacy in Somerville and routine medical appointments in the surrounding communities. To best accommodate the needs of everyone in the city and to maximize the use of our funding, we will be capping the number of rides per week. To ensure the health and welfare of every resident of Somerville, exemptions will be made for chemotherapy and radiation appointments. To find out more information or to schedule your ride, please call Connie Lorenti at 617-625-6600 ext. 2319. All rides must be booked two business days in advance. This program is funded through ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funding.

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.

Rethinking retail in our Somerville plans



By Will Mbah
Candidate for Somerville
City Councilor at Large

In the business press recently, I have seen several articles discussing the problem of shrinking retail activity. Then, with the news about the bankruptcy of the Christmas Tree Shop at Assembly Row, I thought it important to consider what may be the impacts of the trends of change in retail trade for Somerville?

Before COVID, our city planners were already thinking about how e-commerce was changing our shopping habits. Several “big box” stores in the city had become vacant, including part of the Somerville Avenue Target plaza (now a medical clinic) and the K-Mart at Assembly Square (now being re constructed for offices). After COVID, Bed/Bath and Beyond and Christmas Tree Shop at Assembly also have closed.

The planners have described these big box closures as an opportunity to phase out auto-oriented and energy inefficient retail spaces. In the neighborhood plans and the 2019 Zoning Ordinance they wrote new standards to require smaller retail storefronts with pedestrian oriented architectural features.

In this way, they expected that small local businesses would fill new spaces. They listed as permitted uses, all the daily services that people need – barbers and cleaners, wellness and childcare, coffee and baked goods. They permitted independent businesses “by right” but required “formula” retail operations to get special permits. When granting such permits the ZBA and Planning Board could attach multiple conditions to make modern stores look and feel like mom and pop shops.

Using other tools of design review, small business and cultural/arts grants, they expected to increase diverse and lively local commerce.

Economic development

Contemporary planning theory has defined retail trade

as a sector that can create jobs, attract investment, generate “multiplier” spending, and add value to properties – creating new wealth from which communities can draw capital and revenue for physical amenities and social benefits.

In the city’s “linkage” studies, market-rate rents from ground floor retail are expected to carry building maintenance costs so that upstairs residential rents can stay at moderate levels. Similarly, ground floor spaces and stand-alone retail buildings are expected to pay taxes at the higher-level commercial rates, helping to offset the burden on residential tax payers.

Despite the theories, it is now difficult to see evidence that the expected spatial, functional, economic or value-generating impacts are being realized.

Recently, local planners have analyzed the data, looking at the trends of: (i) commercial assessments; (ii) retail employment and business formations; and (iii) building permits and Planning Board and ZBA approvals. All three data sets show declining numbers and trends for the retail sub-sector.

Property assessment

The city’s assessors have been decreasing the values of retail and ground floor properties across the city from FY2020 to FY2023. Most clear are the data on stand-alone retail buildings and commercial condo units. For example, at Assembly Square, a sample of six stand-alone retail buildings has shown a drop in assessed values within the range of 13.2% (391 Revolution) to 15.4% (375 Assembly Row).

At Union Square, the ground floor commercial condo at 181 Washington Street (now occupied by a dental clinic) has dropped by 7.9% in value between FY22 and FY23, compared with a gain of 7.1% for the upper floor residential condos. Next door at 197 Washington, the upper floor condos have increased in value in the range of 6.3 to 6.9%, while the ground floor condo (a restaurant and barber shop) has declined by 2.1% since 2020.

Stretched across the city similar declines in assessment add up to a loss of millions of commercial tax dollars. Of course these losses are currently offset by the revenue

gains from new lab buildings coming on line. But the longer trend appears to be a shift of balance among the sectors of commercial and residential tax base that should be better understood. We may also need to recalibrate in our planning the potential of off-budget contributions and community benefits from mixed-use developments.

Jobs in retail and services

Another aspect of economic planning that may require adjustment is the expectation that retail and local services will continue to provide employment and opportunities for entrepreneurs. Our workforce training programs often look to the retail sector to find jobs for youth and entry-level workers. But even before COVID, retail employment was not growing in tandem with the city’s growth in wealth and population. Retail employment crashed in 2020 and businesses relied on PPP loans for temporary relief. Post-COVID employment and business revival in retail and services has lagged behind other sectors.

In December 2019 the state Department of Economic Research database showed the retail sector in Somerville with 3,698 workers in 210 business units. In December 2023 these figures were at 3,471 workers in 206 business units. This was before the shut-down of Bed and Bath and the Christmas Tree Shop with loss of about 100 jobs.

What is in our neighborhood plans?

Looking at the retail spaces, newly built since 2016 or permitted and under construction, the “pipeline” totals several hundred thousand new square feet of retail space to be filled. Unfortunately, riding and walking around town, we can see many of these spaces remaining vacant or occupied by non-retail activities – such as co-working spaces and medical offices with tinted windows, rather than the lively, sidewalk oriented activity envisioned in the plans. In Boston, Mayor Wu appears to be considering new subsidies for retail businesses and workers to revive dead downtown streets. Hopefully, we will not reach this point in Somerville, but it does appear that our visionary neighborhood planning could use a dose of economic reality.

If you want to learn more or support my campaign, please visit my website at willmbah.com.

Somerville Traffic Commission tackles variety of issues

CONT. FROM PG 11

cross at the Bonair side of this block, and it creates an arrival and dismissal curb space closer to the main entrance of the Edgerly school.

Furthermore, Hanafin presented a request regarding the curb on the east side of Cross St. from approximately 26 feet South of Brook St. to approximately 75 feet South of Brook St. be converted to 49 feet of two-hour parking except by permit to ac-

tive arrival and dismissal only between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, September through June and two-hour parking except by permit at all other times.

Regarding the curb on the South side of Bonair St. from approximately 38 feet West of Cross St. to approximately 58 feet West of Cross St., there is a request to install 20 feet of accessible parking and regarding

the curb on the Northside of Bonair St., from approximately 45 feet West of Cross St. to approximately 65 feet West of Cross St. there is another request to convert 20 feet of resident per parking to accessible parking. He noted that there is an existing accessible parking space here, and the request is to shift that slightly to be closer to the entrance.

Next, regarding the curb on the South side of Bonner Ave. from

approximately 58 feet West of Cross St. to approximately 178 feet West of Cross St., there is a request to convert 120 feet of accessible parking and resident parking to school bus-only parking between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, September through June and resident permit parking at all other times. He also presented a request to prohibit the right turn from McGrath Highway to Bo-

nair St. between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. through 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, except for school staff. He noted there is currently a right turn restriction, and they are simply requesting an extension to reduce congestion in this area while students are getting picked up. The traffic commission voted to approve all these curb use changes, and the meeting was adjourned shortly after.

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Building Commissioner and Fire Chief order closure of 90-92 Union Sq. building

CONT. FROM PG 4

deteriorate the brick masonry and timber structural elements of the building.”

“Again, at the clock tower, we do not recommend any “no-build alternative” or additional delay to address the serious structural defects, resulting from ongoing and persistent water infiltration, that are destroying the clock tower. We believe a decision to rebuild or demolish the clocktower down to the adjacent sloping roof level should be the first order of business. A one-year time-frame is recommended for these repairs to be completed.”

“Overall, the exterior masonry façade is in fair-to-poor condition with various sections of deteriorated or failed mortar joints, cracked or spalled brick masonry units, abandoned mechanical anchors, failed and/or missing sealant joints, and areas of shifted masonry. Several of these locations may be a life safety concern for occupants and pedestrians walking around the building.”

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2023 docent tours of three historic sites in Somerville



From now through the end of October, there will be Docent Tours of Three Historic Sites in Somerville

Prospect Hill Tower
2nd Thursdays: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., except Sept. and Oct.: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. 3rd Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Dates: 8/19, 9/14, 9/16, 10/12, 10/21

Old Powder House
1st Thursdays: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., except Sept. and Oct.: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. 4th Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Dates: 8/26, 9/7, 9/23, 10/5, 10/28

Milk Row Cemetery
3rd Thursdays: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., except Sept. and Oct.: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. 1st Sundays: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Dates: 8/17, 9/10, 9/21, 10/1, 10/19

Inclement weather cancels any event. Call 311 (617-666-3311) for updates and check the City's calendar: <https://www.somervillema.gov/events>. Sponsored by the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission and the Somerville Museum www.somervillema.gov/historicpreservation and <http://somervillemuseum.org>.

Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Art is everywhere... — Photo by Denise Provost

BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER
By Bobbygeorge Potaris

A cartoon drawing of a man with a large nose, wearing a suit and tie, laughing heartily with his mouth wide open.

What are a school teacher's 3 favorite words?
June, July, August.

On This Day in History
August 16

1513 – Henry VIII of England and Emperor Maximilian defeat the French at Guinegate, France, in the Battle of the Spurs.

1777 – France declares a state of bankruptcy.

1858 – U.S. President James Buchanan and Britain's Queen Victoria exchange messages inaugurating the first transatlantic telegraph line.

1896 – Gold is discovered in the Klondike of Canada's Yukon Territory, setting off the Klondike Gold Rush.

1914 – Liege, Belgium, falls to the German army.

1965 – The Watts riots end in south-central Los Angeles after six days.

1977 – Elvis Presley dies of a heart attack in the upstairs bedroom suite area of his Graceland Mansion in Memphis, Tennessee.

1987 – Astrological alignment of sun, moon and six planets marks what believers maintain is the dawning of a New Age.

1988 – IBM introduces artificial intelligence software.

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Yart Sale last Saturday

Yart Sale is a citywide event that took place on Saturday, August 12. Think of a yard sale but with ART! Featured artists included: Jo Studio, Britt Jones Art, Robert Boyer Pottery, Amanda Claire, Cheat Death Tintype and Bulgihan Press.

— Photos by Claudia Ferro



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Lyrical

SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

DeWitt Henry's recent prose collection, *Endings & Beginnings: Family Essays* (MadHat Press, 2021), was longlisted for the PEN/Diamonstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay, 2022. His first poetry collection, *Foundlings*, is available from Life Before Man/Gazebo Books in September, 2022, and his second collection, *Restless For Words: Poems*, in November from Finishing Line Press. He was the founding editor of Ploughshares and is Prof. Emeritus at Emerson College. Details at www.dewitthenry.com.



PRATFALLS

Your middle brother
promised to catch you.
He'd practiced himself
with your oldest brother.

Remember? Stand straight,
face him. Hands at sides.
Shoulders back. Tuck chin.
lean forward, like a board.
Don't catch yourself or step.
No hands out. Just topple.

You try, but take a saving step.
"Don't worry. We'll try it again!
I'll catch you. Promise."

You do, this time. He does:
inches from the ground.

We made an act of it.
Not only on backyard grass,
or rug inside, but on
our swimming club's cement,
while others stared.

'It's Not Love Till Someone
Loses an Eye' by Clay Ventre

It's Not Love Till Someone Loses an Eye
By Clay Ventre
Nixes Mate
www.nixesmate.pub
ISBN: 978-1-949279-47-4
50 Pages
\$18.00

Review by Dennis Daly

First books of poetry rarely surprise. Clay Ventre's initial collection, *It's Not Love Until Someone Loses An Eye*, does. His first-rate love poems are off-beat and oddly self-demolishing. He chisels each quirky narrative to innovative perfection and then keeps on chiseling. The new, miniature worlds created by Ventre's persona and his persona's lover highlight reality's instability and logical absurdness. But that's alright. Creators (read poets), after all, are (for good or ill) gods and goddesses by virtue of their productions, and they make sense by rearranging the raw material of chaos.

"Across a crowded room" love's magic defeats distance and verbal communication in Ventre's piece entitled *Soiree*. A broken semaphore of compelling motion causes contact between two lovers and opens an ever-expanding, uncanny zone of passion and ardor. Ventre concludes the poem by describing this newfound lover's haven,

That's love, he said.
That's faith.

(That's life, I think now,
both for clowns and
children of alcoholics.)

CLIMATE CHANGE

if the frame of that heavenly arch...
over us should loosen and dissolve itself

if celestial spheres should forget
their wonted motions..., turn themselves
any way as it might happen

if the prince of the lights of heaven
which now as a giant
doth run his unwearied course
should as it were through



the party was over
the guests having shrugged
themselves to indifference
and disappeared in a
haze of ennui and
disappointed sex
leaving them a vast
and empty space
they could finally wander
across as lonely nomads

Continued on page 23

a languishing faintness
begin to stand and to rest himself

if the moon should wander
from her beaten way,
the times and seasons of the year
bend themselves
by disordered and confused mixture

the winds breathe out their last gasp,
the clouds yield no rain
the earth be defeated of heavenly influence,

the fruits of the earth pine away
as children at the withered breasts
of their mother...

what would become of man himself,
whom these things now do all serve?

Off The Shelf

CONT. FROM PG 22

and find each other—
read her book together
and agree that the weather
inside them was the same

The battle of the sexes starts small with afterthoughts and little motions that signal cataclysmic changes. Ventre’s poem *Infinity War* is well titled, with surprises at every turn. Here the protagonist god, albeit newly created himself, sets a pose of dominance by announcing the superiority of his divine passions. His consort pushes back as she fashions their future together. The poet puts it thusly,

She said
It’s not a competition
and he saw now that
she had been carving
out of some
as yet undiscovered stuff
a miniature world
for them to inhabit someday
—It kind of is
He shook from his
Closing throat

When dreams and reality clash, addition results, a detritus, not deliberate, but needing to be dealt with in a concerted way. In Ventre’s poem *The Impossibility of Some Situations* the lover’s expectations of his beloved’s largesse grows exponentially to the tune of twelve small elephants. His lover arrives in some distress, and she denies culpability. Loneliness and longing take over and the protagonist puzzles over his next move. Here he explains his conundrum and cedes his own future over to his fantasized beasts,

when I woke up from the dream
they were all here and
now they won’t leave me

They can’t stay here
She said

I know
He said
But they won’t leave

Well

She said
It’s them or me

He looked down at the smallest elephant he had taken
to be their leader and waited for a sign

It came in the form of a wink
timed
to the sound of a closing door

Love’s danger often slips into softened tokens and pleasure’s intensity, both underestimated and overlooked. Ventre’s title poem *It’s Not Love Till Someone Loses An Eye* reminds all mere mortals of their frailty in the face of God-given fervor. Right from the get-go mankind serves love’s desire under full threat. The poet opens his poem by powering up his persona’s beloved,

I should warn you
She said
Two of my former lovers
were dragged to their
deaths by wild horses

Sometimes a breakfast joint fills the whole world with satiety and delight. But when one tries to reduce it into component parts it somehow loses its luster. In his poem *Breakfast All Day*, Ventre’s protagonist converses with God (the Almighty One) on the virtues of his favorite diner. God pushes back in the way that God always does. An omelet, the music, and the rain become foils in this delicate argument. The protagonist’s beloved becomes the salve. Here God tones down (somewhat unfairly) the man’s satisfaction and hyperbole,

That diner
God said
Is just a cemetery with a pond
in the middle to drown in
they fish the bodies out and bury them
in the surrounding hills
I know
He said
Also
Continued God
To get here
You climbed into a car
Full of men with scarred faces

I know
He said
But the omelet was perfect

Courting demands putting one’s best foot forward or at least a recognizable and familiar foot, soothing to the judgmental beloved. *Of a Feather*, Ventre’s poem of fervid accommodation or, perhaps, rapt identification, succeeds wildly in devolving all oppressive expectations and conjuring up a down-to-earth lover’s tryst. The poet opens his contemplation of same-feathered birds this way,

Don’t come near me
She said from the
other side of the door
I smell like a dumpster
I have no joy in me
And I’m tired
so he walked for 1000 miles
and presented his sad
dusty shoes to her ...

Love’s logic demolishes all competitive philosophies. That’s not to say that it promotes health or happiness. Obsessions usually don’t. In Ventre’s epilogue poem, *The Godless Night Kitchen (Remodeled)*, the poet laments love’s process, but savors the result. Or is it the opposite,

He finds he and she add up
to each other
and in the morning he’ll wake
before her when
someone comes to him and
tells the truth of what
an unfinished symphony
they are

And that all hearts are designed
To harden and crack.
There are birds in there
That’s how they get out

The good news is that somehow most lovers, knee deep in cranberries and jackhammer dust, do survive. Mutually assured destruction still works, and artists of all stripes, as Ventre’s stunning poetry collection attests, navigate between the twin dangers of self-immolation and fame. And more to the point – creation and love triumph.

The greatest films of all time: Coming soon to Somerville Theatre

CONT. FROM PG 1

dramatically since the small, directors-only committee at the Festival Mondial du Film et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique created the first ranking in 1952. Calls for ethnic and gender representation and inclusion of non-director film professionals led to the largest participant pool, with 1,639 individuals participating in 2022’s poll. Atop the taste-making list is *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*, a consummate staple of the slow cinema genre. Chantal Akerman’s cult classic brushes shoulders with your favorite film critic’s favorite films such as *Citizen Kane*, *Vertigo* (the two are the only other films to top the list), and *Mulholland Dr.*, the list’s most recent release. The crown jewels of cinematic history will carry this title until Sight and Sound magazine conducts their Poll of the Greatest Films of All Time in 2032. Savor the remnants of summertime with the sights and sounds of the greatest films of all time at Somerville’s flagship theater.



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