



## Inside:



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## Committee recommends a safer Union Square



Comfort and safety on the streets in Union Square were among the issues covered by the Somerville Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee at their recent public meeting. — Photo by Bobbie Toner

By C. Scott Morris

The Somerville Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC) unanimously motioned to send a 16-page audit letter [1] to city leaders last Thursday, in a monthly public meeting.

It's based on information gathered from a 60-member, community-led walk and aims to increase overall safety and comfort while advising the upcoming Union Square Plaza and Streetscape Project [2], according to the letter.

Transportation Planner Katherine White said the project contains four phases, and they do not have a confirmed schedule yet.

The letter includes findings, recommendations, environmental measurements, and an explanation of their methods.

Continued on page 4

## Solar-powered e-bike rentals launch at Davis Square MBTA Station

Metro Mobility, a Cambridge-based micromobility technology startup, has teamed up with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to launch the state's first solar-powered e-bike charging and rental station. Funded in part by a grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) ACT4All program, the station is now open at the Davis MBTA stop in Somerville, offering a groundbreaking model for clean, affordable, first-mile/last-mile transit.

To commemorate the launch, Metro Mobility held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the morning of August 21, with key public and private stakeholders. Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation Monica Tibbits-Nutt, MassCEC CEO Dr. Emily Reichert, leaders from Metro Mobility, and a coalition of state and local officials celebrated this

Continued on page 11



From left: Jim Stanislaski (MassCEC Managing Director of Accelerating Decarbonization), Hank Webster (MassDEP Director of Climate Strategy), Senator Patricia D. Jehlen (2nd Middlesex), Mayor Katjana Ballantyne (City of Somerville), Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt (Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and MassDOT CEO), David Montague (Metro Mobility CEO) — Photos courtesy of Metro Mobility

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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.

On **Thursday, August 28**, at 6 p.m., **Mayor Ballantyne** will host an **Overdose Remembrance Event** to remember the eight Somerville residents who passed away from a substance use-related overdose in 2024. This event will include the planting of eight purple flags on the Highland Ave. side of City Hall, and one larger flag representing all those lost in prior years. Attendees are welcome to bring a small item of memorabilia to honor their lost loved one. The event will conclude with a moment of silence and candle lighting. City Hall will be lit with purple lights in recognition of **Recovery Month**. The flag and light displays will remain for the entire month of September. **August 28, 6 – 7 p.m.** (Narcans distribution) **City Hall Lawn, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville.**

\*\*\*\*\*

The **Labor Day holiday is Monday, September 1**. City offices will be closed. Trash pickup will be delayed by one day for the full week. We wish everyone a safe, happy Labor Day weekend.

\*\*\*\*\*

Happy birthday this week to several locals: Happy Birthday to our own **Bob “Monty” Doherty**, who is celebrating this week. You can enjoy his historical columns in our paper every other week. We wish him the best. Happy birthday to our photographer, **Claudia Ferro**. We are very happy to have her as our photographer. We wish her a very happy birthday. **Rep. Christine Barber** is also celebrating this week. We wish her a great day. Happy birthday, **Patty Oppedisano**. We wish her a happy birthday. *Continued on page 7*

## Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of August 27 – September 1 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
<b>Wednesday</b> <i>August 27</i>	Partly Cloudy	77°/54°	1%	1%	WNW 10 mph
<b>Thursday</b> <i>August 28</i>	Cloudy	76°/60°	5%	3%	S 12 mph
<b>Friday</b> <i>August 29</i>	Thunderstorms	72°/56°	56%	46%	S 11 mph
<b>Saturday</b> <i>August 30</i>	Partly Cloudy	71°/54°	24%	17%	W 10 mph
<b>Sunday</b> <i>August 31</i>	Sunny	75°/55°	9%	5%	N 9 mph
<b>Monday</b> <i>September 1</i>	Sunny	74°/54°	12%	7%	NE 11 mph
<b>Tuesday</b> <i>September 2</i>	Partly Cloudy	77°/57°	13%	7%	ENE 9 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: **Bicycle Committee weighs in on Somerville Ave. project**

Slaw says:

^Is not dissimilar from asking “Why isn’t there a white history month?”

tracbustin says:

@theoNa They do, it’s called the department of traffic and parking. Pedestrians and cyclists haven’t had a say in road layout in decades and this department finally gives them a chance.

### Response to: **House under construction collapses from fire in Somerville**

Steve Keenan says:

A great effort by the SFD!

The heroic work by the SFD saved the neighborhood. The SFD is awesome!

### Response to: **It’s Howdy Doody time**

Bill Gagne says:

You neglected to mention Phineas T Bluster, the role model for Donald tRUMP

*Log onto TheSomervilleTimes.com to leave your own comments*

## The Somerville Times

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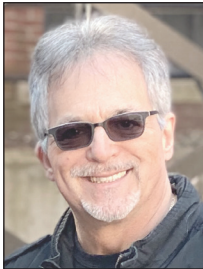
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and speak to the Assignment Editor**

Life in the  by Jimmy Del Ponte

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

# Hot wheels in the Ville



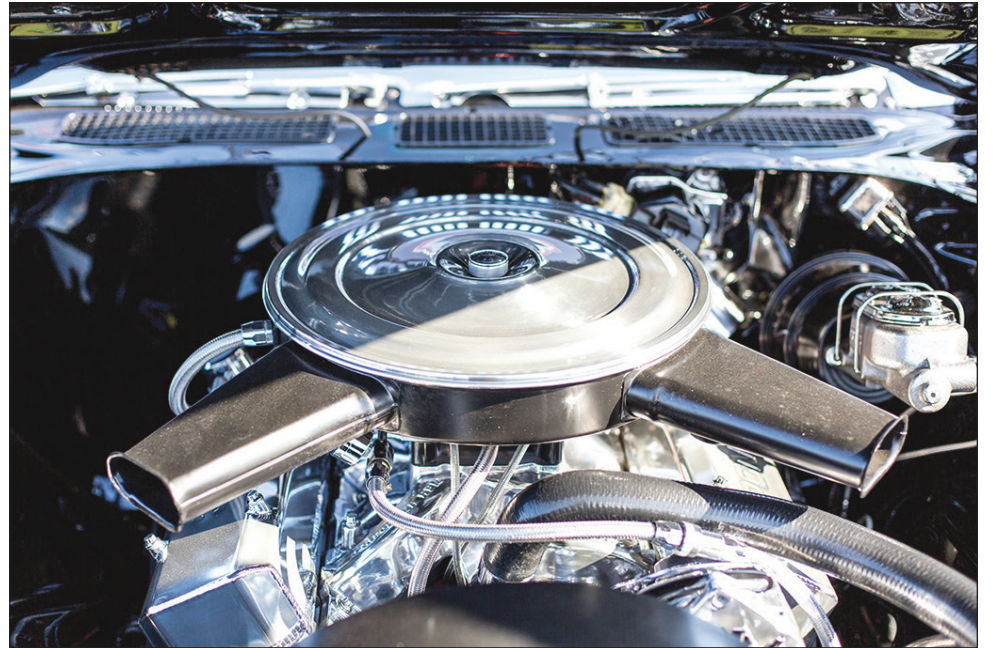
One of my sisters' former boyfriends had a 1967 blue "goat." A GTO with 4 on the floor. It was the coolest car I had ever seen up until then. Even when he popped the clutch and the car ended up on the sidewalk in front of the Middlesex Bank on Highland Ave. in Davis Square. By the way, he was cited for recklessness and driving barefoot. But boy, was that car nice.

That incident fueled my infatuation with "muscle cars," and back in the day, Villens were tooling around in some pretty slick machines. I asked some of my friends to recall some of their former rubber leaving memories, complete with glass packs and cherry bombs.

Cruising up to Friendly's on Highland Ave. in your '72 Cutlass SS (purchased

at Bellotti Olds on Broadway) got a lot of looks. A brand new 1973 Cutlass with swivel seats, also from Belotti's, cost only \$3,500. I remember a cherry '67 Oldsmobile 442, loaded, with a 4-speed, was revving up its engines in the high school parking lot, prompting the vice principal to reprimand the driver. Go get 'em, Mr. Joyce!

Tooling around the Ville in a 1973 T-Bird with a 460 4-barrel turned a few heads. And then there were the Corvettes. They were so sharp-looking. Anyone became cool when they drove a 'Vette. But when the Plymouth Road Runner popped on the scene, it caused quite a ruckus, especially with the 440 cubic inch engine. If one drove by you, you could actually feel the vibration. In 1968, they sold 45,000 Road Runners, and I swear at least ten of them were in Somerville. They sounded sweet, they looked great, and man, were they fast. I remember seeing a cop car



chasing one over the Ball Square bridge once. The driver finally pulled over right before the Powder House rotary and accepted his speeding ticket.

You may remember that sleek 1967 powder blue Thunderbird that was always cruis-

ing up and down Holland St. near the Western Junior High School and Teele Square. *The Somerville News'* Donald Norton was looking wicked pissa in his 1967 Silver Plymouth Barracuda with a 383. A '65 fire engine red Mustang *Continued on page 9*

**DAVIS SQUARE VILLAGE**  
**COMMUNITY EVENT**  
**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13**  
 Rain Date : Sept 14  
**SEVEN HILLS PARK, DAVIS SQUARE**



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## Somerville Police Dept Crime Log August 12 – 18

### Residential Breaking and Entering

25049522: On 8/14/25 at approximately 3:41 p.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Flint St. for a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim, who stated a male party entered her shed and stole a tool.

### Residential Breaking and Entering

25049672: On 8/15/25 at approximately 8:37 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Evergreen Ave. for a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim, who stated he left his apartment and when he returned, noticed his front door was kicked in. Nothing was reported missing.

### Residential Breaking and Entering

25049464: On 8/14/25 at approximately 11:20 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Adam St. for a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim, who stated someone had broken the glass door to the apartments. Nothing was reported missing.

### Robbery

25049030: On 8/12/25 at approximately 8:43 p.m., Somerville Police responded to the Cambridge Hospital to speak with a victim of a robbery. Upon arrival, the victim stated he was in Davis Sq. and was approached by two males who demanded money and then attacked him. The suspects stole his phone and cash. Officers identified the suspects.

### Assault

25049020: On 8/12/25 at approximately 7:56 p.m., Somerville Police responded to Bromfield Rd. for a weapons call. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated she was walking down Warner St. and was shot with an airsoft gun by a passing vehicle. No injuries were reported. Officers identified the suspect.

### Assault

25050007: On 8/16/25 at approximately 2:33 p.m., Somerville Police responded to a business in Assembly Row for a larceny. Upon arrival, officers spoke with an employee who stated a male party entered the store and proceeded to steal several items. The male then pushed the employee and threw items at her.

### Assault

25049819: On 8/15/25 at approximately 6:36 p.m., Somerville Police took a report from a female party regarding a past assault. She stated that while in Davis Sq with her child, a male smashed a bottle on the ground and shards of glass cut her child.

### Assault

25050175: On 8/17/25 at approximately 4:52 a.m., Somerville Police responded to an apartment complex on Broadway for a past assault. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he was smoking a cigarette in the basement and was attacked by four females and two males.

Other Crimes: 1 Vandalism + 6 Car breaks + 1 Bike theft + 2 MV thefts + 1 MV vandalism + 1 Package theft

— Somerville Police Department



## Committee recommends a safer Union Square CONT. FROM PG 1

Overall, PTAC suggested planners could improve Union Square by considering comfort, safety, crossing time, sidewalk conditions, public art, green space availability, and driver compliance.

“We divided the square into seven key areas,” said Committee Chair Alessandra Seiter, “and that is how we structured our recommendations.”

By ranking each area, PTAC identified the most problematic locations. The committee also picked high-priority recommendations during the meeting.

People disliked the intersection between Webster Ave. and Prospect St. the most, Seiter said, noting the X-shape and noise level added to its dismal score. Some audit participants, who filled out checklists on the intersection, recorded concerns with safety, seating, signal, and crossing time, car speeds, and driver compliance.

PTAC recommends, in the short term, lengthening the pedestrian phase time

and increasing its overall frequency. The committee also recommends allowing pedestrians to cross diagonally, changing the current tactile pads, adding a No Turn on Red sign, and introducing an audible prompt at the intersection.

For the long term, PTAC suggests changing sidewalks and the guardrail, moving utilities underground, and creating a pickup/drop-off area for cars.

White said that the intersection will be addressed in Phase 1 of the project.

Toward the north, a section of Prospect St., from the Green Line Station elevator to Somerville Ave., got the second-lowest score.

“Our key recommendations for this area are to create a mid-block crossing across Prospect St., which we’ve been advocating for many years at this point,” Seiter said. The letter also suggests adding wayfinding signs, planters, tables, art, and seating in the area.

Out of all the locations, the Webster Ave. and Washington St. intersection scored the highest.

During the audit, the Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) noted that tactile markings for visually impaired people were often installed in a confusing way, and they sometimes pointed to the middle of the intersection, posing a safety risk.

SCPD also said that raised crossings that lack tactile markings can pose as tripping hazards to visually impaired people, according to the letter.

The Groundwork Somerville Green Team recorded the heat index, noise levels, and air quality during the walk.

“Some key areas in the walk audit area were significantly hotter than the ambient temperature,” Seiter said. “The heat index averaged about 8 to 11 degrees hotter, which is a good indication that there should be some more green space

and less asphalt.”

The noise levels remained in the moderate to loud range. “Nothing got into dangerously loud territory, but that level of noise for a longer period of time can be stressful,” she said.

She added that the air quality measurements were quite good, with the only poor measurement taken near an idling bus.

“There are lots of amazing suggestions here. Some things will be easier than other things, and the letter is incredible,” said Transportation Planner Justin Schreiber.

He said the city can also consider using quick-build treatments for the project.

### Links:

[1] [https://docs.google.com/document/d/163XvrEGuE-KiSHIHOD-b4LYwDHam\\_5TWU3ECviPuDYHQ/edit?tab=t.0](https://docs.google.com/document/d/163XvrEGuE-KiSHIHOD-b4LYwDHam_5TWU3ECviPuDYHQ/edit?tab=t.0)

[2] <https://voice.somervillema.gov/union-square-p-and-s>

# Ballantyne administration launching free Block Party Play Kits

This year, Somerville block parties are getting even more fun. Funded by Mayor Ballantyne’s FY26 budget, the Block Party Play Kits are free, borrowable kits filled with games and equipment to help neighbors turn their street into a playground.

Residents who apply for a block party license can now also request a Play Kit to bring added energy and entertainment to their neighborhood gathering. The kits are available at no cost, delivered and set up by the City’s vendor Knucklebones, and then picked up after the party.

Each kit includes a rotating mix of equipment to encourage all-ages play and neighborly connection.

Possible items include:

- Giant Jenga and Connect Four
- Cornhole
- Scooters, PlasmaCars, and stilts

- Basketball hoops and street hockey
- Parachutes, jump ropes, hula hoops, and balance games

• Spikeball, tether tennis, and more  
 “Block parties are one of the best ways to build community on your street,” said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. “By adding free Play Kits, we’re giving residents even more tools to create joyful, welcoming spaces where kids and adults alike can come together, play, and connect.”

**How it works:**

• Request a Play Kit when applying for your block party license through Citizenserve: [somervillema.gov/blockparties](http://somervillema.gov/blockparties)

• Play Kits are available on a first-come, first-served basis and must be requested at least three weeks in advance.

• Kits are available for 1–5 hours on the day of your party.

Whether it’s your first block party or



your fifteenth, Somerville invites residents to take advantage of this new program and bring some extra fun to their street this

summer.

For more information and to apply, visit: [somervillema.gov/blockparties](http://somervillema.gov/blockparties).

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## COMMENTARY

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## Candidate Questionnaire 2025, Somerville Fair Housing – Part 2

Fair Housing means no discrimination! Candidates for Mayor and City Council had the chance to present their views on non-discrimination in housing by answering a questionnaire from the Somerville Fair Housing Commission, a nonpartisan group of volunteers. We are sharing all the answers we received. The Commission hopes you, the voters, will use the candidates' answers as you decide how to vote in the September 16 primary and the November general election.

Answers from challengers are below; answers from incumbents were published in last week's edition of *The Somerville Times*.

### Challengers

This year, the first 3 of 6 questions for candidates who have not been elected before are:

*Question 1: Have you ever seen or personally experienced discrimination in housing (either in renting, buying, or getting a mortgage)? What did you observe, how did you handle it, and how did you feel about it?*

*Question 2: What do you think are the most common forms of housing discrimination in Somerville?*

*Question 3: What is the most important thing that Somerville landlords, property managers, real estate agents, or owners selling their homes need to know to further Fair Housing in Somerville? What would you do to increase compliance with Fair Housing law?*

The answers to the remaining 6 questions for challengers will be printed in next week's edition. Here are all the answers we received either from challengers or people running for an open seat:

*Question 1: Have you ever seen or personally experienced discrimination in housing (either in renting, buying, or getting a mortgage)? What did you observe, how did you handle it, and how did you feel about it?*

**Jason Mackey, City Council candidate, Ward 5:**

To be honest, I can't say for certain that I've faced overt housing discrimination myself. I've been fortunate not to have someone slam a door in my face or say the quiet part out loud. But as a gay Black man and lifelong renter, I've spent my adult life navigating a housing system where you

often wonder, did that broker not call me back because of demand... or something else? That question sticks with you.

The truth is, most discrimination in housing today doesn't look like what it did decades ago. It's quieter. It's being told a unit has already been rented when it hasn't. It's submitting an application and never hearing back, while someone else does. It's resumes or rental inquiries with certain names getting fewer responses, statistically and anecdotally. It's the friend of a friend who was discouraged from applying because they had a Section 8 voucher, or the landlord who suddenly got cold feet after a tenant disclosed a disability.

These forms of discrimination are hard to prove, but they're real, and they're corrosive. They create a system where who you are subtly determines what doors open for you. And they're part of why I'm running: because housing is too fundamental a need to be rationed based on bias, assumptions, or silence.

**Emily Hardt, City Council candidate, Ward 7:**

I have witnessed several close friends experience housing discrimination. I have had friends have difficulty finding an apartment to rent when pregnant (in one instance) and with a young child (in another instance), which I believe to be due to landlords not wanting to de-lead their apartments. I have also witnessed friends who are immigrants and who formerly lived in public housing face discrimination when looking for housing. All these instances of injustice made me angry. No one should face this kind of discrimination and have housing be so precarious.

**Michael Murray, City Council candidate, Ward 7:**

I'm not aware of having ever personally experienced discrimination in housing.

**Justin Klekota, City Council candidate, At Large:**

Discrimination in housing is never acceptable, and I thank the Somerville Fair Housing Commission for their valuable work receiving complaints from members of our community about housing discrimination in Somerville and providing legal references to them. To the best of my

knowledge, I have not personally experienced housing discrimination. As a City Councilor, I am committed to working with Somerville residents and our City Commissions to advance the cause of justice in housing, employment, City services, our schools, and beyond.

**Marianne Walles, City Council candidate, At Large:**

No, I have not.

**Ari Iaccarino, City Council candidate, At Large:**

I'm a straight white guy with amazing credit, no kids, and no prison record. So, regarding access to market-rate rentals, I've faced zero discrimination, and that's a great demonstration of the privilege I've had.

However, the one time I wanted to get on an affordable rental list in Boston, I never received a call back from the complex even though they advertised it. I qualified for Section 8, but the length of time it would have taken would have been untenable. Consequently, like most folks in this situation, I continued to send a majority of my take-home pay to just have a roof over my head since there was no other viable option.

I understand that pricing people out of cities is a structural issue and not discrimination in the legal sense, but it is one of my main focuses and something I will continue to reference throughout these prompts. There is little to no power renters have other than the hope that their landlord will be a local who doesn't raise the price on them.

Finally, being able to consider anything akin to a mortgage in Somerville is so out of my financial league despite having worked for over 20 years. Millionaires and housing lottery winners shouldn't be the only people who get to buy a two-bedroom apartment in Somerville.

**Scott Istvan, City Council candidate, At Large:**

An unfortunately common experience I've heard about is friends with various health conditions not being able to find suitable housing, whether that is mold free, has adequate temperature control, or properly functioning appliances. Unfortunately, requesting that a landlord take care of these issues (that are legally required)

has led to landlords not renewing leases, or jacking the rent up as a form of lease non-renewal. It's frankly disturbing that landlords are shirking their legal responsibilities and causing my friends to be unstable in their housing situations.

**Holly Simone, City Council candidate, At Large:**

I experienced age discrimination when looking for a college apartment in Somerville. I was discouraged to apply for the unit based on my income and work history, then told the unit was taken when I applied. I was not aware that I had rights or how to ask for help.

In my role as Chair of the Somerville Disability Commission, I have had several Somerville residents ask for my help when experiencing discrimination in housing. Working with city staff and doing outreach to state agencies for legal advice and representation has shown me how fearful people are to report abuse and discrimination in housing, even when our city is supporting them with resources and holding owners accountable to the law. Marginalized populations experience many obstacles to finding a safe, affordable and often accessible place to live. Residents should not be fearful of asking for help or reporting issues.

**Ben Wheeler, City Council candidate, At Large:**

I haven't personally experienced housing discrimination, but I've heard about it directly from friends. A few have told me about apartment tours where it was clear—through condescending questions or dismissive treatment—that the landlord's broker wasn't planning to send their application to the landlord. In one case, a friend worried that the broker assumed they couldn't afford the deposit because of a biased assumption about their perceived race. They left feeling humiliated, and ultimately didn't even apply. Hearing these stories made me angry, but also resolved: we need a city where people don't have to feel that kind of doubt and exclusion when they try to find a home. No one should be made to feel like an outsider in our community.

*Continued on page 16*

# COMMENTARY

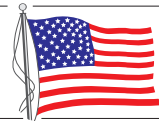
## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Somerville salutes its dedicated workforce on this Labor Day.

## Our View Of The Times



On the first Monday of September, Labor Day is celebrated to honor and recognize the American labor movement and the works and contributions of laborers to the development and achievements in the United States.

It is also a time to show appreciation for all the everyday workers of today who help keep our economy strong and serve the needs of everyone.

Beginning in the late 19th century, as the trade union and labor movements grew, trade unionists proposed that a day be set aside to celebrate labor. "Labor Day" was promoted by the Central Labor Union and the Knights of Labor, which organized the first parade in New York City. In 1887, Oregon was the first state of the United States to make it an official public holiday. By the time it became an official federal

holiday in 1894, thirty states in the U.S. officially celebrated Labor Day.

Labor Day is called the "unofficial end of summer" because it marks the end of our culture's nominal summer season.

Of the 7% of Americans who take two-week vacations, many take their vacations during the two weeks ending Labor Day weekend. Many fall activities, such as school and sports – particularly football –

begin about this time.

To take advantage of large numbers of potential customers with time to shop, Labor Day has become an important week-end for discounts and allowances by many retailers in the United States, especially for back-to-school sales.

So, enjoy the long weekend. Take time to relax or enjoy some outdoor activities. You work hard, you deserve it.

### Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

Happy birthday to **Marilyn Publicover**, the sister of our former publisher, who is celebrating this week. We wish her the very best. We wish all of our Facebook friends, such as **Louise Cruz-Partee, El-lie Loder Chute, John McDermott, Bob Baxter, Cheryl Endicott-Ribeiro, Michael Madden, Leesette Bengar, Isabel Mercauto, Donna M Morabito, Thomas B Mercier, Andreza S. Moon, and Mary Casavanta**, 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 will hold a **virtual Overdose**

**Prevention Training** as part of a monthly virtual training series in partnership with **Cambridge**, on **Tuesday, September 2, 3 – 4 p.m.** Registration link: [bit.ly/4m-JcOsw](https://bit.ly/4m-JcOsw).

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Mayor Katjana Ballantyne** and the **Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA)**, in proud partnership with the **Brazilian Women's Group**, invite community members to celebrate 203 years of Brazilian independence at the third annual **Brazil flag raising** on **Thursday, September 4**, on the **City Hall concourse** (79 Highland Ave.) at 3 p.m. Rain date: **Thursday, September 9**. For more infor-

mation, contact [soia@somervillema.gov](mailto:soia@somervillema.gov).  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Ward 3 voters**, save the date. **Thursday, September 4, 7:00 p.m.** at the **Somerville High School**. The **Ward 3 Democratic Committee** will host the **Ward 3 School Committee Candidates Forum** featuring three exciting candidates who want to represent Ward 3 on the **Somerville School Committee**. All members of the community are invited. The forum offers an opportunity to hear from the candidates about K-12 education, early childhood programs, special education, and the future of Somerville schools in our rapidly changing community. Neigh-

bors are invited to submit questions or topic ideas to [ward3dems.somerville@gmail.com](mailto:ward3dems.somerville@gmail.com). At the primary on **Tuesday, September 16**, the top two vote getters will advance to the final election in November, so this is your chance to hear directly from the candidates and to make an informed decision. The forum is cosponsored by the **Somerville Democratic City Committee**.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The **City of Somerville** is planning to build a new **PK-8 public school building**, and the **Construction Advisory Group (CAG)**, **Mayor Ballantyne**, and **Somerville Public** *Continued on page 21*

# FUN & GAMES

Ms. Cam's

# Olio

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

#986

1. In what year did Oregon first recognize Labor Day as an official public holiday?
2. Who signed the bill making Labor Day a federal holiday?
3. What Broadway musical was Ariana Grande in when she was a teenager?
4. What fruit is known for keeping doctors away if eaten once a day?
5. Who wrote the song *I'm a Believer* for the Monkees?
6. Which comedy duo starred in the 1930s film *The Music Box*?
7. Who directed the movie *Reservoir Dogs*?
8. Which food is typically harvested during the August season in the U.S.?
9. Which social media platform launched in August 2005?
10. What is a second full moon within a single calendar month called?
11. What is the name for the area directly above an earthquake's focal point?
12. What is the name of the fairy in Pinocchio? *Answers on page 14*

## The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

1. Salt was once used as a form of currency.
2. Your fingernails grow faster on your dominant hand.

### STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

MEET ME IN...

#### ACROSS

1. Manual calculator, pl.
6. Beach Boys: "\_\_\_\_ Only Knows"
9. Army beds
13. Pressed ham and cheese sandwich
14. Part of spch
15. Popular Latin dance
16. Influencer's creation
17. Hula dancer's flowers
18. Birdlike
19. Meet me here, under the arch
21. Meet me at the Top of the Rock
23. Comic book expression for alarm
24. Press backward arrow key
25. "Hand" with claws
28. Spreadsheet software command
30. Day off, backwards
35. Bug-eyed
37. "Cheers" regular
39. Coupe alternative
40. Be dependent
41. Damage one's reputation
43. Slightly (2 words)
44. Prefix for below
46. Shade of beige
47. Java neighbor
48. War mounts
50. Rope fiber
52. "\_\_\_\_ Now or Never"
53. Leave at the altar
55. Flapper's feathers
57. Meet me at the London Bridge
61. The Black Eyed Peas: "Meet Me \_\_\_\_"
65. Meet me in \_\_\_\_ Mara, Kenya
66. Undergarment
68. Meet me in Australia to see this bear
69. Done to printer cartridge
70. Corn unit
71. Poet W. H. \_\_\_\_ of "Funeral Blues" fame
72. Infamous Nazi villain
73. Strong solution of sodium
74. Like gelled hair

#### DOWN

1. Parts of a play
2. Actor Reynolds of "Smokey and the Bandit"
3. Cain's victim
4. Paddler's vessel
5. Endows or empowers
6. "Buffalo \_\_\_\_ , won't you come out to-night..."
7. Keats' poem
8. Jinn or genie
9. Guinea pig or capybara
10. Mixture
11. Russian monarch
12. What Titanic did
15. Went to bid farewell (2 words)
20. Meet me in Orthodox church to see these
22. Meet me in Tokyo, pre-1968
24. Meet me in the largest city in Netherlands
25. Meet me under the Eiffel Tower
26. Real estate broker, e.g.
27. "The Bonfire of the Vanities" author Tom \_\_\_\_
29. Meet me by the Trevi Fountain
31. Adipose tissue
32. Meet me at the Burj Khalifa
33. Like the Tower of Pisa
34. Bigfoot's cousins
36. Swirling vortex
38. Filly's mother
42. Popular Cuban dance
45. Be next to, as in rooms
49. Fall from grace
51. The Kenosha Kickers' songs
54. Sticker on a jar
56. Run \_\_\_\_ of the law
57. Same as ayah
58. Respiratory rattling
59. Osiris' sister and wife
60. Opposite of zigs
61. Tortoise's opponent
62. Do like fly fishermen
63. Sheltered, nautically
64. Pull
67. Everybody loved him on TV

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		
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57	58	59	60						61				62	63	64
65								66	67			68			
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72								73				74			



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### Soultion to last week's crossword puzzle:

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

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.

Hot wheels in the Ville CONT. FROM PG 3

Convertible with black interior turned a few heads when it pulled into the Bal-A-Roue parking lot in Meffa. My buddy loved his '69 Charger 440, and the cops loved to chase it.

The first car I ever drove was a cousin's brand-new 1969 Chevy Super Sport. I still remember how awesome those flags on the emblem looked. From then on, I yearned for fast cars. They included a 1979 Firebird and my 1992 anniversary edition Chevy Camaro convertible. That car was a rocket ship. I traded it in and now I drive a family-friendly Chevy Tahoe. Some other cars of Somerville's cruising past were a 1974 Datsun 260Z, 88' Dodge Daytona, 1989 Firebird Formula, a 1973 T-Bird 460 4 barrel, and last but not least, a 68 mustang GT 390 bored and stroked with full race cam, Hurst 4 speed, Holly 750 4bbl carb that once did 160 on the expressway at 4 a.m. It



probably slowed down to 100 on McGrath Highway.

One day, I was coming out of La Contessa bakery, when Highland Ave. was still a two-way street. A GTO was racing a Shelby Mustang, using both lanes. I remember seeing people jump back onto the sidewalk, and I almost dropped my cannoli! I jumped back into my 1979 Cougar and popped some Zeppelin in the 8-track player.

There were Z28s, Cougars, Mustangs, IROCs, Formulas, and Firebirds. A friend gives us this parting thought. "I loved

my '78 Buick Regal white with T-Tops and plush red velvet seats with sport wheels! Sadly, I totaled it on Route 93 on my way to work. Now I drive a 1996 green Mercury Sable! We long for the days of 'cudas and goats." Someday, I hope to get another cool set of wheels like the ones we used to drive. Hopefully, when the kids get out of college, and I retire!

I miss the days of driving muscle cars around Somerville. But the good news is, if I ever get the urge to "leave a patch," my pal has a sweet '79 Camaro that he may let me borrow.

The Somerville Times  
Historical Fact of the Week

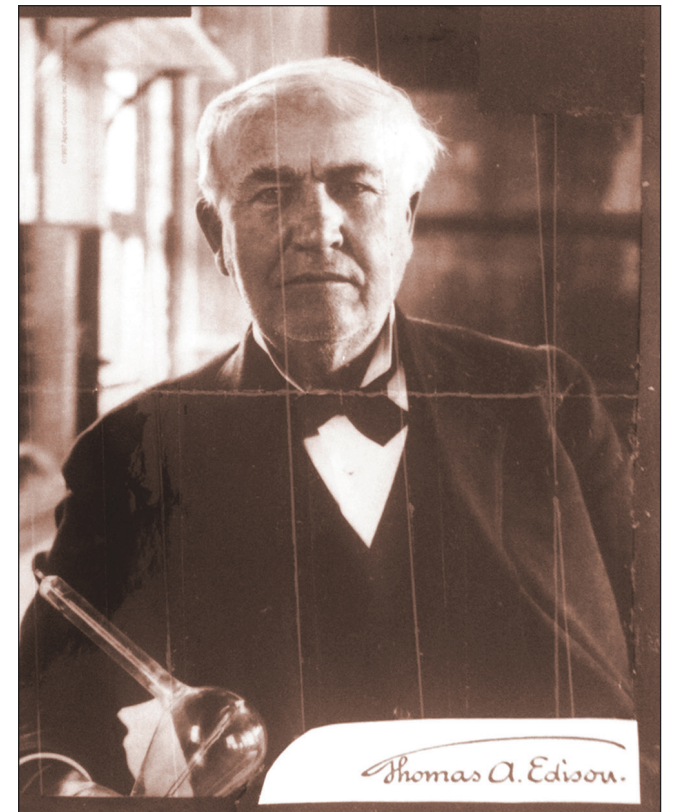


Eagle feathers #336

This article first appeared in the August 20, 2014, edition of The Somerville Times.

Two Guys, A Girl, and iRobot  
By Bob (Monty) Doherty

The inspiration and genius of Thomas Edison is still alive and well. The first recording of words capturing sound so that you can hear yesterday's words today was accomplished by Edison. He held over 1,200 American patents in his lifetime.



Edison's first two inventions were created at 109 Court Street in Boston in the electrical shop of Charles Williams of Somerville. Williams' business was the early engineering of municipal fire telegraph alarms. Edison's most famous invention was the incandescent lamp, which captured light for mankind. Many agree that his next most important invention was his 1877 phonograph. This invention was the first to capture the "voice of mankind." This led to the motion picture camera of today. Edison's first recorded words were, "Mary had a little lamb." The subject of this poem was Mary Tyler, a Somerville resident for over 35 years. In 1877, Edison was also credited with the world's first robotic talking doll. His dolls would sing a variety of nursery songs.



Today, after the relative dormancy of well over a century, robotics engineering is exploding. In the 1990s, two guys (Rodney Brooks and Colin Angle), a girl (Helen Greiner), and a robot – or should I say "iRobot" – arrived in Davis Square from M.I.T. and started *Continued on page 13*

LEGAL NOTICE

VOTER REGISTRATION



LAST DAY TO REGISTER

Friday, September 5, 2025, at 5:00pm  
or online until midnight

FOR THE CITY PRELIMINARY ELECTION  
held on Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Election Department: Somerville City Hall Hours

MONDAY, TUESDAY  
& WEDNESDAY ----- 8:30 a.m. ----- 4:30 p.m.  
THURSDAY ----- 8:30 a.m. ----- 7:30 p.m.  
FRIDAY ----- 8:30 a.m. ----- 12:30 p.m.

To request a voter registration form

- CALL 617-625-6600 ext. 4200 for a Voter Mail-In Registration form
- Download a Mail-In Voter Registration form from the City Website and mail to the Election Department
- Register Online by visiting the City Website

All mail-in voter registration forms must be post-marked by 09/05/2025.

The City of Somerville does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, national origin, sexual preference, disability, or any other protected category in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services or activities. Auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, reasonable modifications in policies and procedures will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request

## LEGAL NOTICES

Legal Notices can also be viewed on our website at [www.thesomervilletimes.com](http://www.thesomervilletimes.com)

## BID ADVERTISEMENT

*The Somerville Housing Authority, the Awarding Authority, invites e-bids from DCAMM Certified Roofing Contractors for the Partial Roofing Replacement at the (200-2) Mystic River Apartments Development, 15, 35 & 45 Memorial Road in Somerville, Massachusetts, 02145, in accordance with the documents prepared by SOCOTEC AE Consulting Inc. of Boston, Massachusetts.*

The Project consists of: The replacement of existing low-sloped built-up roofing with a new modified bitumen roofing system over the existing precast concrete modular additions at designated buildings and locations.

The work is estimated to cost **\$293,412 including Alternates.**

Bids are subject to M.G.L. c.149 §44A-J & to minimum wage rates as required by M.G.L. c.149 §26 to 27H inclusive.

General bidders must be certified by DCAMM pursuant to M.G.L.c. 149 Section 44D. The General Bidder must be certified eligible in the DCAMM Prime/General category in **ROOFING**.

Bid Forms and Contract Documents are available online after **Wednesday, August 27, 2025, after 2:00 PM** at [www.Projectdog.com](http://www.Projectdog.com). Enter Project Code **870481** in the project locator box and select "Acquire Documents" to download documents. All plan holders must have an active online account on [www.Projectdog.com](http://www.Projectdog.com) to acquire documents and to receive project notifications.

Addenda, if issued, will be posted to the Projectdog website and shall be accompanied by e-mail notification to every individual or firm on record as having received the Contract Documents.

This project is being Electronically Bid (E-Bid). All bids shall be submitted online at [www.Projectdog.com](http://www.Projectdog.com). Hard copy bids will not be accepted by the Awarding Authority. Tutorials and Instructions are available online at [www.Projectdog.com](http://www.Projectdog.com). For assistance, contact Projectdog Inc. at 978.499.9014.

General Bids for this project will be accepted from eligible bidders until **Wednesday, September 17, 2025 at 2:00 PM** and will be publicly opened, forthwith online.

General bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit that is not less than five (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount (considering all alternates) and made payable to the Somerville Housing Authority.

Supplier Diversity Office (SDO), formerly known as SOMWBA. The combined participation benchmark reserved for such enterprises shall not be less than 13% of the final contract price including accepted alternates. **Request for waivers must be sent to FOHLC ([david.mcclave@mass.gov](mailto:david.mcclave@mass.gov)) 5 calendar days prior to the General Bid date. NO WAIVERS WILL BE GRANTED AFTER THE GENERAL BIDS ARE OPENED.**

The successful bidder will be required to furnish a Performance Bond and a Labor and Material (Payment) Bond each in the amount of one hundred percent (100%) of the contract sum. Bonds shall be obtained from a surety licensed to do business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the form shall be satisfactory to the Somerville Housing Authority. The cost of such bonds shall be included in the bid price.

Attention is directed to the Department of Labor Standards (DLS), a copy of which is included in the Contract Documents, and will be made a part of the Contract. The Awarding Authority is exempt from sales and federal excise tax to the extent permitted under law. Bidders should not include such taxes in figuring or in references to any bid.

Bidding procedures and award of the Contract and Subcontracts shall be in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 149, Sections 44A through 44J inclusive, of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, including all current amendments; and the guidelines established by the Deputy Commissioner of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Capital Assets Management (DCAMM), dated June 30, 1981.

The Awarding Authority reserves the right to waive any irregularities in or to reject any and all bids, if it be in the public interest to do so, and to act upon the bids and make its award in any lawful manner.

All questions and requests for interpretations must be submitted in writing via e-mail to [parul.belsare@socotec.us](mailto:parul.belsare@socotec.us) by the General Bidders until **Wednesday, September 10, 2025 until 2:00PM**

PRE-BID CONFERENCE / SITE VISIT:

Date and Time: **Wednesday, September 3, 2025 at 10:00 AM**

Address: 30 Memorial Road Somerville, MA 02145.  
Meet at the main entrance of the Administration Building.

Attendance at this pre-bid conference is strongly recommended for parties submitting a bid

Brian Langton  
Somerville Housing Authority

8/27/25 The Somerville Times



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

**THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## LEGAL NOTICE - HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC)

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

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, 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](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov).

## TO USE A COMPUTER

Registration URL:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_WW0ngbETRTq2fw86LtBAMQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WW0ngbETRTq2fw86LtBAMQ)

Webinar ID: 889 5069 9459

## TO CALL IN

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

## ALL OF THE CASES ADVERTISED BELOW HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING COMPONENT

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

## HP25-000056 - 10 Sargent Avenue

Applicant: Law Office of Michael LaRosa  
Owner: Patrick and Kayla Canty

*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](mailto: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](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov) NO LATER THAN NOON one week prior to the meeting date. Email [historic@somervillema.gov](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov) with inquiries.*

8/27/25 The Somerville Times

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Division of Wetlands and Waterways  
MassDEP Boston Office 100 Cambridge Street Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Pursuant to 33 U.S.C. 1341 and M.G.L. c. 21 § 26 - 53 and 33 U.S.C. 1341 and M.G.L. c. 21 § 43, notice is given of a 401 Water Quality Certification application for the construction of a bicycle and pedestrian crossing over the Mystic River in Everett and Somerville, Massachusetts by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation – Highway Division, Ten Park Plaza, Room 7360, Boston, MA 02116. The purpose of the project is to connect the Somerville and Everett communities by constructing a bicycle and pedestrian crossing. The proposed crossing will measure approximately 780 feet long, 60 feet high, 20 feet wide and will run essentially parallel to the existing MBTA bridge. An abutment and landing will be constructed on both sides of the crossing. Additional information may be obtained from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation – Highway Division at the above address, attention Courtney Walker or by emailing [Courtney.l.walker@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:Courtney.l.walker@dot.state.ma.us). Written comments should be sent to Heidi Davis, MassDEP Wetlands Program, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114 or [heidi.davis@mass.gov](mailto:heidi.davis@mass.gov) within twenty-one days of this notice.

Any group of ten persons, any aggrieved person, or any governmental body or private organization with a mandate to protect the environment who submits written comments may appeal the Department's Certification. Failure to submit written comments before the end of the public comment period may result in the waiver of any right to an adjudicatory hearing.

8/27/25 The Somerville Times



**SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
30 Memorial Road  
Somerville, Massachusetts 02145  
Telephone (617) 625-1152 Fax (617) 628-7057  
TDD (617) 628-8889

## ADVERTISEMENT

## REQUEST FOR DESIGN SERVICES (RFS)

## SHA Job 2514

The Somerville Housing Authority, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed proposals from registered Engineering firms to provide professional design and construction administration services to replace the 13 existing rooftop exhaust fans at our Weston Manor development located in Somerville, MA 02144. The replacement will include evaluation and design of a new rooftop exhaust fan system sized for Weston Manor, 8 story elderly housing development.

A briefing and site inspection is scheduled for **10:00 AM on Thursday, September 18th, 2025**, at the Weston Manor elderly facility located at 15 Weston Ave, Somerville, MA 02144.

Response to this RFS must be submitted no later than **1:00 Thursday, September 25th, 2025**.

The RFS may be obtained after **8:00AM on Wednesday, August 27th, 2025**, by contacting [ryanc@sha-web.org](mailto:ryanc@sha-web.org) or by phone at 617-625-1152 Ext.331.

Questions must be sent in writing to [ryanc@sha-web.org](mailto:ryanc@sha-web.org) no later than **Friday, September 19th, 2025**.

8/27/25 The Somerville Times



**SOMERVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
30 Memorial Road  
Somerville, Massachusetts 02145  
Telephone (617) 625-1152 Fax (617) 628-7057  
TDD (617) 628-8889

## ADVERTISEMENT

## REQUEST FOR DESIGN SERVICES (RFS)

## SHA Job 2513

The Somerville Housing Authority, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed proposals from registered Engineering firms to provide professional design and construction administration services to replace one of the existing elevators at our Highland Garden development located in Somerville, MA 02143. The replacement will include evaluation and design of a new elevator sized for Highland Garden, 7 story elderly housing development.

A briefing and site inspection is scheduled for **10:00 AM on Wednesday, September 17th, 2025**, at the Highland Garden elderly facility located at 114 Highland Ave, Somerville, MA 02143.

Response to this RFS must be submitted no later than **1:00 Wednesday, September 24th, 2025**.

The RFS may be obtained after **8:00AM on Wednesday, August 27th, 2025**, by contacting [ryanc@sha-web.org](mailto:ryanc@sha-web.org) or by phone at 617-625-1152 Ext.331.

Questions must be sent in writing to [ryanc@sha-web.org](mailto:ryanc@sha-web.org) no later than **Friday, September 19th, 2025**.

8/27/25 The Somerville Times

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# Somerville School Building Committee prepares for designer selection and reviews architect proposals

By Norah Doyle

The Somerville School Building Committee met on August 18 to further discuss progress regarding the Winter Hill Community Innovation School project and the feedback received from the community surrounding it so far.

## Community Input

The city's Construction Advisory Group (CAG) is continuing to survey community members on what they think should be done with the new school – should Winter Hill combine with Benjamin G. Brown or continue as an individual school?

Community members have until mid-September to participate in the survey. After CAG collects the data from the surveys, it will make a recommendation to Mayor Katjana Ballantyne by late October of 2025. The mayor will decide, based on the recommendation from CAG, whether or not the city will build a larger school that will accommodate both students from the Winter Hill and Brown schools, or solely Winter Hill.

No matter what decision the mayor

lands on, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) requires that the city explore multiple enrollment options as part of the feasibility process.

## Architect Proposals

Six different design firms submitted proposals to work on the project: Jonathan Levy Architects, Machado Silvetti, MDS & Sasaki, Perkins Eastman, TSKP Studio, and William Rawn Associates.

The MSBA's Designer Selection Panel is set to review these applications over the course of two meetings on September 9 and September 23. Three Somerville representatives will attend these panel meetings. Two of the three representatives have been selected: Director of Infrastructure and Asset Manager Rich Raiche and Superintendent Rubén Carmona. The third representative is TBD.

School building committee members stressed the importance of sustainability, community engagement, and student-centered design as important criteria to follow when selecting the design firm for the job.

## Take Aways



The Somerville School Building Committee recently met to go over issues related to the Winter Hill Community Innovation School project.

While no major decisions were made at this meeting, important takeaways include the progression of ongoing community surveys and that six architectural firms are

currently under review for selection. The next school building committee meeting will be held virtually, September 29, at 4:30 p.m.

# Solar-powered e-bike rentals launch at Davis Square MBTA Station

CONT. FROM PG 1

milestone for clean transportation in the Commonwealth.

The Davis Square ChargeLock Solar station offers round-trip e-bike rentals that are 100% off-grid, providing power from integrated solar panels and a storage battery that keeps e-bikes charged regardless of weather. With discounted \$1 per day rentals for income-qualified riders, the station supports both environmental and transportation equity goals, helping to eliminate barriers to sustainable travel.

The system is built on Metro Mobility's patented ChargeLock™ technology, which uses a single smart cable to simultaneously lock and charge e-bikes. While ChargeLock has already powered numerous grid-connected stations for micromobility fleets in Massachusetts and California, this new solar-powered installation marks a major leap forward for the industry. The ChargeLock Solar model removes the need for costly and time-consuming electrical infrastructure, allowing e-bike charging stations to be deployed virtually anywhere with adequate sunlight.

"This project demonstrates what's possible when public transit, clean energy, and innovation come together," said Met-

ro Mobility CEO David Montague. "The ChargeLock Solar station is not just a pilot, it's a scalable blueprint for how we connect communities to transit in a clean and equitable way."

"This launch shows what we can achieve when climatetech innovation meets everyday transportation needs," said MassCEC CEO Dr. Emily Reichert. "Metro Mobility's solar-powered station in Somerville demonstrates how we can cut pollution, reduce energy usage, and expand mobility access at the same time. It's a practical, scalable solution that can be deployed in more communities—and we're proud to help make it happen in Massachusetts."

Strategically located at a busy MBTA subway station, the new e-bike hub helps close the first-mile/last-mile gap, offering transit riders an easy and green way to get to and from home, school, or work. The pilot supports the MBTA's broader efforts to improve multimodal access and increase ridership by expanding the reach of its core transit lines.

"Massachusetts is leading the way in creating a transportation future with more choices, fewer emissions, and bold innovations in solar energy," said Transportation

Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbits-Nutt. "We are expanding bike lanes, improving pedestrian safety, and investing in micro-mobility options that make it easier and safer to get around. The launch of our first solar-powered e-bike charging and rental station at Davis Square in Somerville reflects our commitment to bringing innovative, sustainable solutions directly into communities—offering residents a cleaner, more affordable way to connect to local businesses, transit hubs, and key destinations."

In addition to delivering service, the Davis Square station will also generate critical operational insights. The ChargeLock Solar station and the IoT-enabled e-bikes it supports will continuously collect data on power generation, battery use, trip distance, and ridership trends. Riders will be prompted to complete short surveys in the Metro Mobility app, allowing the company and its public partners to track trip purpose, mode shift, and equity impact.

The resulting dataset will offer a first-of-its-kind look into the performance and potential of fully off-grid micromobility programs, providing MassCEC and the MBTA with real-world evidence to guide future deployments across the Commonwealth.



As cities across Massachusetts and beyond grapple with how to decarbonize transportation while improving access, the ChargeLock Solar station represents a bold, practical step toward a greener, more connected future.

## About Metro Mobility

Metro Mobility is a leading innovator in the micromobility industry, dedicated to developing solutions that enhance urban transportation while prioritizing sustainability and user experience. Based in Cambridge, MA, Metro Mobility is at the forefront of the movement to create a more efficient and environmentally friendly future for cities around the world. For more information, please visit [www.metro-mobility.io](http://www.metro-mobility.io).

# Beacon Hill Roll Call



Volume 50 - Report No. 34 • August 18-22, 2025 • Copyright © 2025 Beacon Hill Roll Call. All Rights Reserved. By Bob Katzen

Beacon Hill Roll Call can also be viewed on our website at [www.thesomervilletimes.com](http://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 for the 2025 session through August 22.

The Senate has held 68 roll calls so far in the 2025 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.

Senate rules allow a senator, who is not physically at the session in the Senate chamber, to vote remotely from any location and without giving a reason for his or her absence from the Senate chamber. The House does not permit remote voting.

Sometimes a senator is not able to attend only one or two sessions during which roll calls are held, but since there are sometimes multiple roll calls on each one of those days, the number of roll calls they missed can be high even though they only missed one or two sessions.

Thirty-six (90 percent) out of 40 senators did not miss any roll call votes and had a 100 percent roll call attendance record.

Four (10 percent) out of 40 senators missed one or more roll call votes.

The senator who missed the most number of roll calls is Sen. Lydia Edwards (D-Boston) who missed 23 roll calls (66.1 percent roll call attendance record.) Edwards did not respond to repeated requests from *Beacon Hill Roll Call* asking her why she missed so many roll call votes.

Two other senators who missed one or more roll call votes are Sens. Mike Barrett (D-Lexington) who missed 2 roll calls (97.0 percent roll call attendance record) and Adam Gomez (D-Springfield) who missed one roll call (98.5 percent roll call attendance record.) Neither one responded to repeated requests from *Beacon Hill Roll Call* asking them why they missed any roll call votes.

It is a Senate tradition that the Senate president only votes occasionally. Current Senate President Karen Spilka follows that tradition and only voted on 18 (26.5 percent) of the 68 roll calls while not voting on 50 (73.5 percent) of them.

## SENATORS' 2025 ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE RECORDS THROUGH AUGUST 22, 2025

Here are the 2025 roll call attendance records of local sen-

ators through August 22.

The percentage listed next to the senators' 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

**ALCOHOL LICENSES (H 4285)** – The House gave initial approval to a bill that would make changes in some of the state's alcohol permitting laws.

The measure would authorize on-premises alcoholic beverage consumption within certain noncontiguous area licensed premises subject to approval by the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC). Current law prohibits this licensing unless the areas are contiguous.

The measure also would repeal the current law that prohibits any applicant who has been convicted of a federal or state narcotic drugs charge from holding an on-premises alcoholic beverages consumption license; as well as the current restriction prohibiting any applicant who has been convicted of a felony from holding an off-premises alcoholic beverages consumption license. Those prohibitions would be replaced by a new law requiring that applicants for any license must be of satisfactory character to local and state licensing authorities.

"This bill is an important step toward updating outdated alcohol laws to reflect today's business landscape," said sponsor State Treasurer Deb Goldberg. "By removing unnecessary restrictions and improving oversight, it supports economic growth in our communities while maintaining strong oversight and prioritizing public safety."

Rep. Christopher Worrell (D-Boston), who also sponsored a similar bill, did not respond to repeated requests by *Beacon Hill Roll Call* asking him to comment on the bill.

Supporters said allowing areas to be non-contiguous mainly impacts outdoor seating and patios. They noted that licensees who have patios that are separated by a sidewalk or a road, under current law, have to go through extra steps to extend their license to that area. They said that the change would simplify that process.

They said that for on-premise and off-premise licenses the rules around criminal record are currently inconsistent. They noted that having any felony conviction disqualifies

an applicant from holding an off-premise license, but for on-premise licenses, only narcotics related charges disqualify an applicant.

They argued that the bill would allow local licensing authorities and the ABCC to standardize this process and evaluate an applicant's criminal record more holistically. They cited cases in which an applicant was charged decades ago and has had zero issues since then. They noted that all applicants would still have a CORI check and be subject to consideration of their character and fitness.

**LIQUOR LICENSE SUSPENSION (H 4275)** – Current law suspends the liquor license of and closes down for a period of time, any package store that is found guilty of selling to a minor or an intoxicated individual. However, in big box stores, supermarkets, gas stations and other places in which liquor sales are not their primary business, a violation results only in the closing of the liquor department.

A bill, sponsored by Rep. Steven Howitt (R-Seekonk), and given initial approval by the House, would amend current law so that the entire establishment, not just the liquor department, is closed down.

"This bill levels the playing field between small family-owned liquor stores and large corporate big box stores selling liquor," said Howitt. "It will serve to tighten up the oversight for alcohol sales."

Howitt continued, "This bill was filed to strengthen public safety in our cities and towns because illegal alcohol sales have been on the rise due to relaxed regulations during and resulting from the pandemic. The bill also fixes an inadvertent disparity that has developed by reinstating uniform consequences and standards for all establishments licensed to sell alcoholic beverages who willfully violate important public safety regulations regarding alcohol sales to minors or intoxicated individuals. All retailers of alcoholic beverages will be treated equally regardless of whether the establishment is a supermarket, convenience store or package store.

**FORTUNE TELLERS (H 475)** – The House gave initial approval to legislation that would eliminate the current state law requiring that all fortune telling applicants must have lived in the city or town in which they are seeking their license to practice, for at least one continuous year prior to filing their application.

Supporters said the bill will remove an old law that has become antiquated and makes no sense.

"A municipal employee reached out to *Continued on page 19*

## 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.

## Zoning for the Future: How Somerville Is Turning Policy into Progress

By Mayor Katjana Ballantyne

When most people hear the word “zoning,” they don’t exactly think “innovation.” Zoning is often seen as dry, technical, and bureaucratic. But in Somerville, we’re using zoning as a tool to do big things: protect the arts, tackle climate change, support small businesses, and grow an inclusive economy. Most recently, with four new zoning amendments I recently signed into law, we’ve cleared the path for a transformational new master plan at Somernova, a 7.4-acre innovation campus in Union Square.

Yes, this is zoning. But it’s also vision, strategy, and community-driven progress.

Somernova is already home to organizations like Greentown Labs, The Engine by MIT, Aeronaut Brewing, and the Somerville Bike Kitchen. It reflects the eclectic, future-focused spirit of our city. But its buildings are aging, and demand for space is growing. These new zoning amendments will ensure that as Somernova expands, it grows in a way that reflects Somerville’s values.

First, we’ve created some of the stron-

gest arts protections the city has ever seen. In response to a risk assessment from the Somerville Arts Council and artist advocates, we’ve established an Arts Overlay District that guarantees at least 100,000 square feet of Arts and Creative Enterprise space. At least 60,000 square feet must be located right on campus and remain permanently affordable. These new rules help safeguard Somerville’s creative economy and restore the original vision for the site as a place where arts and innovation go hand in hand.

We’re also using zoning to shape Somerville’s economic future. As the life sciences market cools, we’re seeing a surge in climate tech, companies focused on energy storage, sustainable materials, and decarbonization. These are businesses looking to grow, and Somerville is ready to welcome them.

Greentown Labs, which opened here in 2013, helped make Somerville a national hub for climate innovation. Now we’re building on that success. Our new Research and Development District zoning is designed to attract and accommodate climate tech companies by replacing out-

dated lab definitions with flexible, clearly defined use categories. This supports job creation in a growing sector and opens up a new revenue stream for the city.

At full buildout, the Somernova redevelopment could bring up to 1.5 million square feet of new space to the site, including up to 1.4 million square feet of commercial uses. That scale of development could generate more than \$37 million in combined jobs and housing linkage fees over time. These funds will be dedicated to affordable housing and job training programs. It’s a bold investment in Somerville’s long-term resilience.

Mobility was one of the top concerns we heard from residents throughout this process. That’s why the new rules include the most ambitious transportation management standards in city history. We’ve capped on-site parking at 750 spaces and set aggressive mode shift goals, requiring that no more than 25 percent of all trips be made by car at full occupancy. Developers must provide free MBTA passes, carpool incentives, and hundreds of bike parking spaces. If those targets aren’t met, future construction phases can be delayed.

The new zoning also brings a more thoughtful approach to development overall. Under the new Master Planned Development overlay, any proposal for Somernova must be phased over time, with rigorous public review at each stage. Each building must meet high design standards and deliver real public benefit, such as civic space, child care, job training, or affordable housing.

Taken together, these changes send a clear message. In Somerville, we guide development and help set the expectations. We use every tool available, including zoning, to make room for the people, jobs, and ideas that will define what’s next.

I’m proud of the years of collaboration that led us here. City staff, community leaders, the Union Square Neighborhood Council, and Rafi Properties worked hard to reach a visionary Community Benefits Agreement. It includes union jobs, deeply affordable housing, and a new community center, alongside robust arts investments and transparent mobility enforcement.

Now, Somernova will submit its formal master plan for public review. The work continues. But with these new zoning tools in place, we’re on solid ground.

## Historical Fact CONT. FROM PG 9



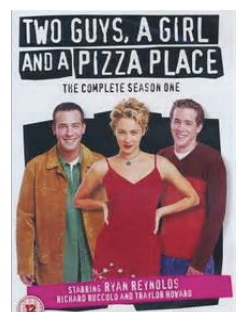
a company. Their first commercial product was an astronomical improvement over Edison’s doll and was called My Real Baby. This amazing robotic doll was high on the 1998 Christmas list. It could crawl, walk, talk, grow, and looked and felt real. It recited the alphabet, numbers, and rhymes. It crawled and walked and changed facially with age. Like the toy robot changed with age, the company’s products also changed.

Maybe when My Real Baby grew up, she hated to clean, because iRobot then invented the highly successful Roomba robotic vacuum. Over ten million have been sold. To say they went a long way in a short time would be an understatement. In the last fifteen years, after moving to Bedford, MA, iRobot has transformed into a world-leader in home, defense, security, and commercial products. The company that was started by two guys and a girl has

gone from dolls to drones since its Davis Square beginnings in 1998.

That same year, less than one mile away, up Holland Street at Teele Square and Broadway, another tale began to unravel. This story was about a different “two guys and a girl.” It involved a popular television sitcom series. Its creator was a former Tufts University student, Kenny Schwartz, who worked at Theo’s Pizza in Teele Square while in school. After college, he became a successful Hollywood creator and director. His hit show was based on Theo’s memories and experiences. The show produced 81 episodes and lasted four seasons. Have you guessed its title yet?

*Two Guys, A Girl, and A Pizza Place.*



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Ms. Cam's

From page 8

# Olio

Answers

- |                               |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. 1887                       | 7. Quentin Tarantino |
| 2. President Grover Cleveland | 8. Corn              |
| 3. <i>The Musical</i>         | 9. YouTube           |
| 4. Apple                      | 10. Blue Moon        |
| 5. Neil Diamond               | 11. Epicenter        |
| 6. Laurel and Hardy           | 12. The Blue Fairy   |

# Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators marks 243 women elected to the Legislature on the 243rd day of the year

As the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators continues its 50th Anniversary celebration, August 31 marks a symbolic milestone: the 243rd day of the year, and the 243rd woman elected to serve in the Massachusetts Legislature.

To commemorate this moment, the Caucus launched a campaign earlier this year to highlight every woman who has ever served in the Massachusetts Legislature, one woman per day throughout 2025. With just 243 women elected in the entire 401-year history of the General Court, this year-long recognition honors both the trailblazers who came before and the leaders shaping our Commonwealth today.

“Our 50th Anniversary has been a time of reflection, celebration, and recommitment,” said Representative Christine Barber (D-Somerville), House Co-Chair of the Caucus. “This

work has never been about one woman or one moment. It’s about ensuring that women’s voices are not the exception, they’re the expectation. We hope this year of recognition leads to even more women stepping forward to serve.”

“We’ve now highlighted 243 extraordinary women, past and present, whose service transformed Massachusetts, said Representative Jessica Giannino (D-Revere), Chair of the 50th Anniversary Committee. “And while our social media campaign will continue into the fall as we grouped several women in each post per week, today we acknowledge a stark truth: we are out of women to highlight. That should both inspire and challenge us.”

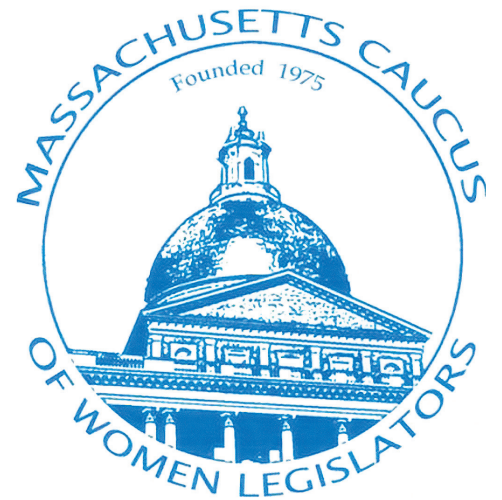
Since 1923, only 243 women have been elected to the Massachusetts Legislature. Just 31 of them served before the Caucus was founded in 1975. This year, the Caucus has not only paid tribute to their leg-

acies but also underscored how much more work lies ahead to build a truly representative government.

“The fact that we can honor every woman who’s served in fewer than 250 days speaks volumes about how far we still have to go,” said Senator Robyn Kennedy (D-Worcester), Senate Co-Chair. “As we continue this historic celebration, we’re calling attention to the need for more women to enter and lead in public service.”

The Caucus’s campaign, featuring daily social media tributes, historical retrospectives, and storytelling from current and former legislators, will continue throughout the year as part of a broader effort to reflect on the past 50 years and inspire the next generation of public servants.

Founded in 1975 by just 14 women, the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators is now the longest continuously-operating bipartisan and bicameral women’s



caucus in the United States. Throughout the year, the Caucus has hosted events, educational programs, and legislative briefings to mark this milestone year.

To learn more about the Caucus and follow the ongoing 50th Anniversary, follow along on Facebook @masscaucus and on Instagram @ma\_womenscaucus.

## Money Map Tip of the Week

By Vincent Hicks, CPA

**Q: Are there any outside-of-the-box options for making a bit of extra money?**

**A:** Yes— and some of them pay more than you’d expect. While part-time gigs are common, there are creative and legitimate ways to earn money that many people never consider! Here are a few unconventional options worth exploring:

- Donate plasma or white blood cells – Plasma donation typically pays \$50–\$100 per visit, while donating white blood cells (leukapheresis) through specialized research centers may pay \$300–\$500 or more per session.
- Participate in paid research studies – Universities and hospitals often seek volunteers for clinical trials, behavioral studies, or product testing—sometimes paying \$50 to \$500+, depending on the study.
- Test websites and apps – Sites like UserTesting or Respondent.io pay people to pro-

vide feedback, often \$10–\$60 per test, from the comfort of home.

• Rent out stuff you own – Think power tools, storage space, cameras, bikes—peer-to-peer rental platforms can turn unused items into passive income.

Bottom line: When you expand your idea of what “earning money” looks like, you might uncover options that are flexible, impactful, and surprisingly well-paid.

**Any questions? I’d be happy to help.**

I’m Vincent Hicks, CPA, based in Somerville with over 20 years of experience. Reach out at [vchicksconnect@gmail.com](mailto:vchicksconnect@gmail.com) or (859) 553-0788.

*Disclaimer: This column provides general financial information and should not be considered legal, investment, or tax advice. Individual situations vary. Always consult a qualified professional for personalized guidance.*



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# Candidate Questionnaire 2025, Somerville Fair Housing – Part 2

CONT. FROM PG 6

## **Jon Link, City Council candidate, At Large:**

I come from a place of privilege. I came to Somerville as a renter and a teacher and had to scrape by for years, but I still benefited from being white, a native English speaker, having good credit, and knowing how to navigate the system. When I tried to buy a home, it was very difficult to get a loan, but I got lucky. Many others don't.

The path to homeownership and even stable rentership is stacked against working families. Large investors continue to buy up housing stock, and regional zoning restrictions have created an artificial shortage. As a result, tenants and would-be homeowners are left effectively powerless. Credit checks punish people for hardships beyond their control. Tenants are judged or exploited for speaking English as an additional language, for having a disability, or even for having a child. I've seen it, and I've heard it at doors. It's wrong.

I understand that landlords want to protect their investments, but we have to strike a different balance. These aren't abstract assets like stocks. These are homes, and people are being illegally and unfairly shut out of them.

## **Christopher Ryan Spicer, City Council candidate, At Large:**

Last year I saw the impact of precarious housing compounded by an ICE detention which divided an East Somerville family. At the request of the remaining parent, I brought over documents for spousal visitation at Plymouth Jail. I often think of that family and the cramped basement housing conditions of their home. Some places have holes in floors, or rent dirt floor basements. Blatant code violations. If Inspectional Services Department (ISD) comes and issues a fine, it is likely a landlord may retaliate by escalating rents. So I know that dilemma of a housing ally or conscientious neighbor, whether to call ISD or overlook the landlord's gross exploitation. Likewise, David Gibbs, Executive Director of the Community Action Agency of Somerville, during the Human Rights Commission focus group, describing the shocking living conditions of undocumented residents who are being exploited for their rent.

The second part of the question: No, I have not personally experienced discrimination in civilian housing. I am assumed to speak English fluently and to be a U.S. citizen. Like a third of Somerville residents I own housing; in my case, I am beneficiary of intergenerational wealth to do so. In

fact, when I think about the offer letter I wrote to the owner about being a young family hoping to raise our kids in the schools here, I was fishing for prejudice. There's no letter a formerly incarcerated person can write that will help. And then you have the fact that a criminal record can block someone from public housing. I have seen conditions of penal housing that make me an ardent advocate for supportive housing. For instance, I have lobbied the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to grant \$9 million toward targeted housing assistance, along with a measure requiring IDs to be provided for "returning citizens" upon release.

## **Jack Perenick, City Council candidate, At Large:**

In 2021, while helping my grandmother downsize to a new apartment, I encountered some difficulty finding buildings willing to rent to tenants they knew would have disability-related needs and require reasonable accommodation. In particular, many apartments were unwilling to answer questions about the ability to temporarily install wall-mounted grab bars or other mobility aids. We were fortunate that we were able to find a newer building which had an elevator, and ground level access that was willing to allow us to make some temporary mobility modifications inside. As a caretaker, our experience was not as difficult as it might have otherwise been. I continue to worry about disabled residents who accept housing while being unwilling or unable to risk asking about the ability to make modifications or ask for accommodations from landlords.

*Question 2: What do you think are the most common forms of housing discrimination in Somerville?*

## **Jason Mackey, City Council candidate, Ward 5:**

The most common forms of housing discrimination in Somerville are often subtle but deeply entrenched:

- Source-of-income discrimination, particularly against voucher holders, is rampant despite being illegal under Massachusetts law. Landlords may find excuses to reject applicants using Section 8 or RAFT, or simply stop responding.

- Family status discrimination also persists, tenants with children may be discouraged, denied, or ghosted, especially in multifamily buildings.

- Race- and ethnicity-based bias still shows up in who gets callbacks, how applications are processed, or what kinds of

questions people are asked. It's rarely explicit, but patterns are visible to those paying attention.

- Disability discrimination, especially when tenants request reasonable accommodations, is more common than many realize.

- Anti, LGBTQ+ bias continues to impact housing access for queer, trans, and nonbinary residents, whether in the form of microaggressions or outright denial.

These forms of discrimination are hard to track because they're usually not overt. But their impact is no less real, and we need better enforcement, better testing, and a proactive commitment to equity, not just a reactive one.

## **Emily Hardt, City Council candidate, Ward 7:**

As noted above, I believe that discrimination based on skin color, national origin, and having young children are quite common. In addition, I think people with disabilities and seniors are often discriminated against, and have a hard time finding housing in Somerville where very few housing options are accessible.

Applicants using mobile vouchers are frequently discriminated against as well. As reported in the Anti-displacement Task Force Report:

"As of September 2023, data from the Somerville Housing Authority (SHA) showed that out of 1,038 mobile Section 8 vouchers issued through the SHA, only 295, or about 28%, were used in Somerville. The rest were used in other cities or towns."

While it cannot be assumed that all of these voucher-holders experienced discrimination, that is a very low percentage who were able to find housing in Somerville and it suggests that discrimination is at least partly responsible.

## **Michael Murray, City Council candidate, Ward 7:**

Here's what I think:

- Discrimination against people with children.

- Discrimination against people of color.

- Discrimination against members of the LGBTQ community.

- Discrimination against people with disabilities.

## **Justin Klekota, City Council candidate, At Large:**

Increasingly, as housing prices in Somerville rise, lower income residents are finding it difficult to find housing in Somerville and may be encountering unlawful discrimination related to their source of

income (e.g. Section 8). In addition to educating the public to combat this type of unlawful discrimination, it is important for our community to increase construction of affordable housing units and expand our definition of affordability to include middle class families as well.

## **Marianne Walles, City Council candidate, At Large:**

I would think the most common is race, disabilities, and children.

## **Ari Iaccarino, City Council candidate, At Large:**

I'm intentionally focusing on financial displacement as a form of structural discrimination we need to address in Somerville. And while not always legally actionable under Fair Housing law, economic displacement in Somerville disproportionately affects renters from protected classes, including racial minorities, families, people with disabilities, older adults, voucher holders, and LGBTQ+ individuals.

## **Scott Istvan, City Council candidate, At Large:**

I'd be willing to bet that discrimination against families with children ranks pretty high given the lead laws and prevalence of lead paint in older homes in the area. Age and job/income discrimination are probably up there as well - I see a lot of postings preferring "young working professionals" out there and have heard of a lot of section 8 discrimination happening as well.

## **Holly Simione, City Council candidate, At Large:**

While housing discrimination exists in several forms, Disability makes up more than half the complaints reported to HUD. Socio-economic discrimination of lower income minorities and people of color also experience housing discrimination disproportionately in comparison to other economic classes. There are countless examples of qualified housing applicants being denied or passed on for a more favorable candidate, leaving the prospective tenant with no option but to reside in an often-inferior alternative. For persons who rely on mobility devices, the lack of affordable and "wheel-accessible" options are very limited, forcing people to leave Somerville.

## **Ben Wheeler, City Council candidate, At Large:**

In practice, I suspect that the most common forms of housing discrimination in Somerville are often not overtly exclusive, but is deeply rooted in economic barriers that hit marginalized groups hardest. Overt exclusion is

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## Candidate Questionnaire 2025, Somerville Fair Housing – Part 2

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definitely a major problem; I've heard stories of bias from brokers or landlords shuffling some applicants to the bottom of the pile, including for reasons of ageism, racism, discrimination on the basis of disability, and aversion to taking applicants with Section 8 vouchers. But there are also practices that might seem neutral, but still perpetuate exclusion—like strict credit score requirements (which may not even be enforced consistently for all applicants), and demanding high upfront deposits and fees. Our aging housing stock also leaves families with children at a disadvantage because some units aren't de-lead, and people with disabilities such as mobility needs struggle to find options that are accessible. These overlapping barriers create a situation where, even without overt slurs or out-right refusals, whole groups are systematically shut out.

**Jon Link, City Council candidate, At Large:**

I've seen it and heard from people in Somerville. There is discrimination against low-income renters, people of color, families with children, immigrants, and voucher holders. Landlords often use credit checks, income requirements, and informal bias to exclude tenants, especially those with Section 8. These practices reinforce racial and economic segregation. We need stronger enforcement, more affordable housing, more public housing, and stronger tenant protections.

**Christopher Ryan Spicer, City Council candidate, At Large:**

In the 2017 Somerville Housing Assessment 44% surveyed said arrest record was cause of discrimination. Housing discrimination is most often seen in exclusionary practice: what happens when background and credit checks are used in the criterion of 'good' tenants. Broker services to find 'ideal' renters make automatic exclusion of potential tenants with vouchers.

66% said race. In the 2021 Housing Assessment, it was reported anecdotally that many long-term Somerville landlords who bought their properties decades ago tend to use informal, limited networks to fill vacant units. Such owners for the most part are white. Fair Housing law extends recourse to those who have experienced discrimination members of protected classes, race/color and/or country of origin. So we have to ask why the City's Latino population is particularly concentrated in portions of East Somerville and Magoun Square.

44% said disability. Fair Housing Law, Massachusetts General Law chapter 151B is the state Fair Housing Act which prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, children, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, public assistance recipient, gender identity, genetic information or physical or mental disability. Beyond the Americans Disabilities Act of 1990 which included persons of living with a disability as a protected class, The Fair Housing Act of 1968 sets most private housing requirements for accessibility. In Somerville, the stock of accessible housing is extremely limited because of a lack of zoning incentives.

Discrimination in Somerville because of presence of children in household is also common. The realtor doesn't want to hear if someone is pregnant. Families with young children don't get rental applications accepted because of aging housing and lead remediation. The \$1500 Massachusetts Lead Paint Removal Tax Credit was designed to improve compliance with Fair Housing law, because many landlords refused to take applicants with children under six. Family or relationship structure was added in 2023 to protected classes in Somerville and does not fall under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) but may appear in the forthcoming assessment.

Seniors are discriminated against in housing when renting, buying or securing finance for their home. Poor elders are most likely to miss rent and tax payments, making them subject to 'just-cause' eviction.

General unaffordability is a structural barrier. For instance, in 2021, there were 4960 households carrying extreme housing cost burdens with below 30 percent Area Median Income (AMI). The trend of that burden on the poorest was increasing, but we await update from the forthcoming 2025 Housing Needs assessment. The forthcoming 2025 Feasibility Study was required to "determine how and under what conditions the City could create units targeted to residents at 30% of AMI and what tradeoffs or additional resources would be necessary to allow projects to be financially feasible with this requirement. What tradeoffs or resources would be necessary for 10% of units be affordable to those at 30% AMI without reducing number of units in other tiers."

As listed above, in Massachusetts, it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of source

of income (section 8 or receipt of public assistance or hourly wage). Only 28% of section 8 mobile vouchers were used in Somerville, as of Sept. 2023 data from Somerville Housing Authority. Discussing this finding, The Anti-Displacement Task Force report validated the assumption the rest were used in other cities and towns because while there is a limited amount of time that they must be applied, they were unlikely to find Somerville landlords who would rent to them, and if they had tried and failed to find housing those rejections were discriminatory. However, none of the four backlogged Somerville cases filed at MCAD as of January 2024 involved discrimination based on source of income.

Complainants can seek injunctive relief with Suffolk Law School's Housing Discrimination Testing Program. Under existing contract with the City of Somerville, De Novo Center for Justice and Healing can represent tenants in fair housing cases. And the City's Housing Division can provide informal advocacy. The Affordable Homes Act signed into law July 2024 created an Office of Fair Housing.

**Jack Perenick, City Council candidate, At Large:**

Many of my friends and coworkers have been subject to age-based discrimination in renting. I suspect given Somerville's younger-than-average population, many students, and young renters are frequently exposed to discrimination in leasing. As an immigrant community, I fear we also have many neighbors who are discriminated against on the basis of their non-citizenship status or national origin. My understanding is that discrimination against Section 8 voucher holders, is in Somerville, as it is nationwide, is prevalent and pervasive. My own experience has taught me that many landlords, intentionally or not, discriminate against those with recognized disabilities, in particular those that might require improvements to the property.

*Question 3: What is the most important thing that Somerville landlords, property managers, real estate agents, or owners selling their homes need to know to further Fair Housing in Somerville? What would you do to increase compliance with Fair Housing law?*

**Jason Mackey, City Council candidate, Ward 5:**

The most important thing housing providers in Somerville need to know is that Fair Housing isn't just a legal obligation, it's a moral one. Housing shapes people's lives, opportunities, and futures. The

choices landlords and brokers make can either open doors or quietly shut them. To increase compliance:

- Education: I support a city run Fair Housing certification for landlords and brokers, particularly those managing fewer than six units. Many aren't aware of the full scope of their obligations.

- Testing and enforcement: The city should invest more in paired testing, data collection, and field investigations. If we're serious about enforcement, we need to act on patterns, not just individual complaints.

- Tenant awareness: Knowledge is power. I would expand outreach so renters, especially immigrants, young people, and low-income households, know their rights and how to assert them.

- Transparency in listings: Require Fair Housing disclaimers and anti-discrimination information in all online and physical rental ads posted within Somerville.

Fair Housing isn't about checking a box. It's about making sure that who you are doesn't dictate where you can live.

**Emily Hardt, City Council candidate, Ward 7:**

I would increase education and raise awareness about both the protected classes and the severity and impact of violations of Fair Housing law. The classes of people who are protected under Fair Housing law is the most important information for landlords, property managers, real estate agents and home sellers to have. They also need to know that housing discrimination is extremely harmful to people and there are consequences for violating the law.

**Michael Murray, City Council candidate, Ward 7:**

It's important that The Fair Housing Commission take an active role, promoting non-discrimination, and responding to discrimination complaints.

**Justin Klekota, City Council candidate, At Large:**

State and Federal Fair Housing Law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, military status, age (except minors), sexual orientation, family status (e.g. have children), source of income (e.g. Section 8), disability, marital status, genetic information, and ancestry. As a City Councilor, I am committed to working with the Somerville Fair Housing Commission and funding its educational outreach efforts to landlords, property managers, real estate agents & owners as well as to residents to know their rights.

*Continued on page 18*

# Candidate Questionnaire 2025, Somerville Fair Housing – Part 2

CONT. FROM PG 17

## Marianne Walles, City Council candidate, At Large:

To further Fair Housing compliance we need to continue to education landlords, property managers, and tenants. I find that more outreach opportunities to engage in conversations can help build better compliance.

## Ari Iaccarino, City Council candidate, At Large:

Rental housing is a business, an investment, and this business happens within an ecosystem of laws created by people. Interested parties, specifically large landlords and property management companies, must recognize that the housing crisis has been exacerbated by their monopolies on homes and lobbying at local and state levels. The public is demanding a stronger culture of compliance and accountability, so they should not be surprised at increasing pressure on them to follow Fair Housing and adapt to a slew of renter protections.

I would require new landlords and property managers to take a mandatory Fair Housing 101 course in order to be certified to do business in Somerville. I would use my M.Ed. to help refine the course if needed alongside housing advocates and real estate professionals. I would also support a volunteer-led city-wide audit program of “secret shoppers” to test for Fair Housing compliance in an effort to enhance accountability.

I will fight to keep as many Somervilians in Somerville as possible through an increase of renter protections and enforcement. Additionally, I want small, local landlords who are doing good by their renters by following the law and keeping rates stable to be eligible for grant money that would de-lead and enhance safety at their properties.

## Scott Istvan, City Council candidate, At Large:

For landlords, agents, and owners, we need to make sure education is available and accessible about their responsibilities. I’m excited about the rental registry that was recently passed in Somerville. Being able to identify rental properties and their landlords more easily will make distributing educational material easier.

We also need to provide more education and support to tenants and prospective buyers. The Office of Housing Stability has helped with this; I’d love to see them get more resources to expand their coverage. I’d particularly be interested in getting residents access to free/city-funded legal aid.

## Holly Simone, City Council candidate, At Large:

Somerville landlords and property owners need to understand the goal of public and elected officials is to promote and expand affordable housing opportunities throughout the City, and they will realize ample profit margins working within these parameters. The reason we have such interest from property managers and developers is the exploding real estate values that we have experienced in the past and will continue to experience for the foreseeable future. We must ensure the Somerville Fair Housing Commission is staffed and funded properly to continue the good work they do educating and enforcing these laws.

Discrimination in housing based on race or color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability is a civil rights violation that will not be tolerated. I would ensure the process to report any such discrimination is accessible to all, kept private and investigated swiftly. I would also ensure all city staff receive annual train-

ing from certified resources and ask that all developers ensure their staff are also trained each year.

## Ben Wheeler, City Council candidate, At Large:

First, landlords, property managers, real estate agents, or owners selling their homes need to understand that Fair Housing isn’t optional or symbolic—it’s enforceable law. Education is key: I would support proactive workshops and multilingual materials that make Fair Housing obligations unmistakable. But education alone isn’t enough. We should strengthen enforcement—supporting the Fair Housing Commission’s authority, and resourcing the Office of Housing Stability and Inspectional Services to respond swiftly to violations. We should ensure that the “Notice of Rights and Resources at the Start of Tenancy” provided to tenants is a clear and complete as possible, and expand or revise it in response to patterns of need; and we should make sure we are making public reporting tools known and accessible to tenants, so that they can recognize common problems and know where to go to report them swiftly. Compliance shouldn’t depend on tenants having the resources to sue—it should be actively monitored and enforced by the city.

## Jon Link, City Council candidate, At Large:

Honestly, they just need to know the facts. Many landlords aren’t aware that any form of discrimination based on race, income, family status, disability, or voucher use is illegal. To increase compliance, I’d support real penalties for violators and better tenant education and advocacy. We also have some models for making better, more affordable housing, like the community land trusts (shout out to the Somerville Community Land Trust), social

housing, and other models that take some of our city’s housing out of the speculative market and put it under community control and make it permanently affordable.

## Christopher Ryan Spicer, City Council candidate, At Large:

First, SomerVIP (Voucher Incentive Program) offers one time incentive payments, money for necessary repairs, and technical support to landlords and realtors who lease Somerville properties for the first time to Somerville residents holding vouchers and other mobile tenant-based programs. Second, Landlord tenant mediation and foreclosure prevention is available through the Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development. Third, Fair Housing in Somerville depends on equal access to the market, something many unintentionally blockade. Equal access to housing accommodations, facilities, services and financial aid depends on sec 7-42 enforcement powers ordained to the Fair Housing Commission, an effort I will continue to support and expand if elected. I would support a strengthened Fair Housing Commission to both investigate complaints and enforce penalties on findings of discrimination.

## Jack Perenick, City Council candidate, At Large:

While we usually think about discrimination in terms of denial of housing, price discrimination and discrimination in the terms of a tenancy agreement are also common. It’s critical we ensure that all people have equal access to fair market prices for housing in our city. In particular, price point discrimination is critical to deflating our rental market. Increasingly, this will mean a regulation of pricing software and AI in addition to traditional forms of discriminatory practices.

— Somerville Fair Housing Commission



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# Somerville Kiwanis Club's back-to-school drive

On August 19, the final step in our annual school supplies/backpack drive before final delivery was completed at the Somerville headquarters of PUMA North America. A great group of Kiwanis members, assisted by some friends and an amazing group of PUMA employee volunteers, was able to stuff all 200 high-quality backpacks with needed school supplies in less than an hour. After a quick group photo, the boxed backpacks were loaded onto member vehicles for delivery to Somerville High School and Prospect Hill Academy.

The school supplies were donated on two Saturdays last month when Kiwanis members set up a donation site in front of Staples at Assembly Row. Dozens of citizens purchased and donated supplies, and many even made cash donations to the program.

Program chairperson, Haley Adams, thanked PUMA North America and their

joint venture partner for this program, United Legwear, for their donation of 200 high-quality backpacks and their support of this program for the past four years. Also, special thanks to Staples at Assembly Row for donating five cartons of loose-leaf binders, as well as their many customers who donated supplies, including one very special customer who shopped for \$150 worth of supplies. After the inventory, the remaining needed supplies were purchased with club funds.

President Tom Austin and co-President Dawn Austin thanked all of the members and volunteers who have helped make these donated backpacks and supplies available to those students who need them the most. Those students will be selected by school officials.

To learn more about the Kiwanis Club of Somerville or to become a member, visit our website [www.somervillekiwanis.org](http://www.somervillekiwanis.org).



Members of the Somerville Kiwanis Club organized the drive for their annual school supplies donation program.



## Beacon Hill Roll Call

CONT. FROM PG 12

me several years back because she had discovered the residency requirement and thought it was a little odd," said sponsor Rep. Susannah Whipps (U-Athol). "A coffee shop in her city was looking to have a tarot card reader, and as it turns out fortunetellers must be licensed in Massachusetts just as a barber or hairdresser would be and also the law requires residency in the community in which they practice. My bill removes the 1-year residency requirement. This law was most likely put in place to prevent grifters or con artists from coming into a town and scamming people."

### QUOTABLE QUOTES

"Massachusetts is moving faster to create reasonably-priced housing and revitalize our downtowns. This new tax credit helps communities turn empty commercial space into homes – bringing people, energy and small-business customers back to main streets while tackling our housing shortage." — Gov. Maura Healey announcing \$10 million in tax credits to help convert underused

commercial buildings into residential and mixed-use housing across Massachusetts.

"These grants invest in the police officers and firefighters who put their lives on the line to protect our communities. Recognizing the urgent needs faced by many departments, we were quickly able to adapt this year's program, providing greater flexibility and immediate access to funds. These changes will have an immediate impact on public safety in Massachusetts communities." — Office of Grants and Research executive Director Kevin Stanton on awarding \$5.7 million to cities and towns to support local fire and police staffing.

"Ensuring that adequate remedial measures are in place to maintain a safe environment for student athletes of color during sporting events is impossible while the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) refuses to release records about its practices and protocols for addressing the rising number of discriminatory incidents." — Sophia Hall, Lawyers for

Civil Rights Deputy Litigation Director, on filing a lawsuit against the MIAA seeking public records regarding incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying at sporting events sponsored by the MIAA.

"The commission amplifies the voices of women and girls, with commissioners shaping policy by studying key issues, advising on legislation and fostering collaboration across the commonwealth. We seek commissioners who reflect our commonwealth's diversity and bring passion, expertise and collaboration to improve access to opportunities and equality for all." — Rep. Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury), announcing the seeking of applicants to serve on the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women - a state-established body charged with reviewing the status of women in Massachusetts and offering recommendations regarding policy that would improve access to opportunities and equality. The application deadline is Monday, September 15, 2025, at 5 p.m. More info at <https://masscsw.org/>

Continued on page 23



**Somerville Fair Housing Commission**  
*Question of the week*



**Q:** Is anybody exempt from the federal Fair Housing Act?

**A:** There are several situations that are exempted from Title VIII:

- 1) A single-family house sold or rented by the owner--but only if done without the use of a real estate broker and without discriminatory advertising (oral or written), and only if certain other conditions are met.
- 2) Rental of rooms or units in owner-occupied dwellings of four units or less.
- 3) Exemptions for familial status include:
  - state and federally owned elderly developments; or,
  - housing intended for and solely occupied by persons 62 years of age or older; or,
  - housing intended for occupancy by at least one person 55 years old or older per unit.
- 4) Exemptions for disabilities include:
  - persons whose tenancy would constitute a direct threat to the health and safety of others; and,
  - persons whose tenancy would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others.

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

**Want to write local Somerville stories?**

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**BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER**

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



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**Somerville through the eyes of Denise**



Birdhouse house... — Photo by Denise Provost

*On This Day in History*

**August 27**

- 1626 – The Danes are crushed by the Catholic League in Germany, marking the end of Danish intervention in European wars.
- 1776 – The Americans are defeated by the British at the Battle of Long Island, NY.
- 1813 – The Allies defeat Napoleon at the Battle of Dresden.
- 1881 – New York state's Pure Food Law goes into effect to prevent "the adulteration of food or drugs."
- 1894 – The United States congress passes an income tax law as part of a general tariff act, but it is found unconstitutional.
- 1910 – Thomas Edison demonstrates the first "talking" pictures—using a phonograph—in his New Jersey laboratory.
- 1979 – Lord Mountbatten is killed by an Irish terrorist bomb in Sligo, Ireland.
- 2003 – Mars makes its closest approach to Earth in nearly 60,000 years
- 2008 – Democrats nominate Barack Obama for president, first African American nominated by a major political party for the office of President of the United States.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

Schools want to hear from you. To learn more about the project and take the survey offered in seven languages, please visit [somervillema.gov/newpkto8](http://somervillema.gov/newpkto8).

A Somerville Town Hall on Libraries and Schools will be held on **September 5, 6:30 – 8 p.m.** at the **East Somerville Community School, 50 Cross Street**. Join in for a discussion with the mayoral candidates about education issues, co-hosted by the **Somerville Public Library Foundation, Friends of the Somerville Public Library, and the Somerville Council of PTAs.** 6:30 p.m. Doors Open for free pizza and free books in the cafeteria, 7 - 8 p.m. The three candidates for Somerville Mayor will discuss libraries and schools. Questions for the candidates will be sourced from you, the community, ahead of time. Do you have questions about libraries and schools for the mayoral candidates? Submit them here and RSVP at this link: [bit.ly/46QkIvr](http://bit.ly/46QkIvr). Deadline for questions is **August 28**. RSVP's are helpful but not required for attendance. Live interpretation in Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Portuguese will be available.

Somerville's Preliminary Election takes place on **Tuesday, September 16**. This election will narrow the candidate pool before the **Municipal Election on Tuesday, November 4**. Offices on the ballot include: Mayor, Councilor At Large, Ward 7 Councilor, and Ward 3 School Committee. Register to Vote. The last day to register to vote is **Friday, September 5**. Election Day: **September 16**. Vote at your designated polling location. Polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. To look up your polling place, get instructions for voting by mail, review a sample ballot, or for other election info, please visit [somervillema.gov/elections](http://somervillema.gov/elections) or call 311 by dialing 3-1-1 or 617-666-3311.

We have a **new tab** on our website, "**Campaign Releases**." Go there to see the latest endorsements, campaign info for this year's election candidates.

**Outdoor Movie Nights at Aeronaut, Saturday, August 30, 9 – 11 p.m.** at **Aeronaut Brewing Company**. Head to Aeronaut on **Saturday nights** over the summer for outdoor movie nights on the patio featuring some favorites. Admission is free. Weather permitting. **8/30 Clueless, 9/6 Jaws, 9/13 Zoolander.** 14 Tyler St., Somerville.

Join the **Somerville Museum** for a **Tavern Talk with Dan Breen: The March from Prospect Hill to Quebec: America Invades Canada, 1775.** **Wednesday, September 3, 7 – 8 p.m.,** at Aeronaut Brewery, 14 Tyler Street. "250 years ago this September, Benedict Arnold led a thousand members of Washington's army to the north, away from the lines around Boston, in an attempt to drive the British out of Quebec. On the way, they battled trackless bogs, debilitating hunger, bone-chilling cold, and the ravages of disease--and that was the easy part! Join us as we relate the story of this, the first, and in some ways the most remarkable, military expedition in United States history."

The **Somerville Garden Club** is holding its annual plant sale. **Sunday, September 21, from 10 a.m. – 1 a.m.** (rain or shine), 331 Summer Street, Somerville. Discover the perfect plant to enliven your garden or windowsill at this popular yearly sale. Perennials for sun and shade, herbs, shrubs, groundcovers, plus a wide variety of house plants, will be featured. Choose from hundreds of plants donated by Somerville Garden Club members and friends – there's something for everyone! Horticultural books, decorative containers, and garden tools will also be for sale. Experienced gardeners will be available to answer questions and assist with plant selections. Proceeds benefit the all-volunteer, non-profit Somerville Garden Club.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our **Arts Editor, Doug Holder**, for setting up a **GoFundMe campaign** for **The Somerville Times**. With the cost of printing going up and a lack of businesses having the resources to advertise, free papers feel the effect. We sincerely thank all who have already contributed and thank any future contributors. If you are interested in helping you please visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-the-somerville-times>. Or if anyone is interested in advertising, please contact [Bobbietoner@aol.com](mailto:Bobbietoner@aol.com). We offer great discounts to help our advertisers be able to advertise. Thank you all so much for your support!

**Somerville voters, save the date. Monday, September 8, 7:00 p.m.** at the **Somerville High School. Somerville City Councilors At-large Candidates Forum. The Ward 3 Democratic Com-**

**mittee** will host a forum featuring eleven of the twelve brave candidates who want to represent you on the **City Council**. All members of the community are invited. 12 candidates are on the ballot. Only 8 will be nominated for the **November General Election**. Many new faces. Are these people the future of Somerville? The forum offers an opportunity to hear from the candidates about issues in our rapidly changing community. Neighbors are invited to submit questions or topic ideas to [ward3dems.somerville@gmail.com](mailto:ward3dems.somerville@gmail.com). At the primary on **Tuesday, September 16**, the top eight vote getters will advance to the final election in November, so this is your chance to hear directly from the candidates and to make an informed decision

Visit the **Growing Center** for some relatively quiet time during the weekly **Red Fire Farm CSA distribution window, Wednesdays, through October 15, 3:30 – 6:30 p.m.** Relax, read, write, sketch, draw, or paint while enjoying a green setting in the city. Limited garden/nature books and art supplies will be available for use on-site. 22 Vinal Ave, 3:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Join **Mayor Katjana Ballantyne** and **Somerville's Council on Aging** for the annual **Mayor's Senior Picnic** at 11:00 a.m. at **Trum Field** on **September 9**. Call **Connie Lorenti** at 617-625-6600 ext. 2319 for a free ticket by **September 5**.

The **Somerville Flea Market** is now open for its 13th year. Vintage vendors, Artisan makers, Farm stand, Live DJ, plus treasures you didn't even know existed. **Sundays, August – October. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., 18 Holland St.**

Somerville author **Lesley Bannatyne** will read and discuss her new novel-in-stories, **Lake Song**, at **Porter Square Books, Cambridge**, at 7 p.m. on **Thursday, September 11**. Lesley will be joined in conversation with **Dr. Talaya Delaney**, and a book signing immediately follows the event. Everyone is welcome!

Save the Date: **What the Fluff? A Tribute to Union Square Innovation** is a madcap festival honoring the invention of **Marshmallow Fluff**. It celebrates Somerville's long-standing tradition of innovation with live music, fluffalicious feasts, sticky games, and so much more happen-

ing **Saturday, September 20**, from 2 to 6 p.m. in Union Square (severe weather date Sunday, September 21)

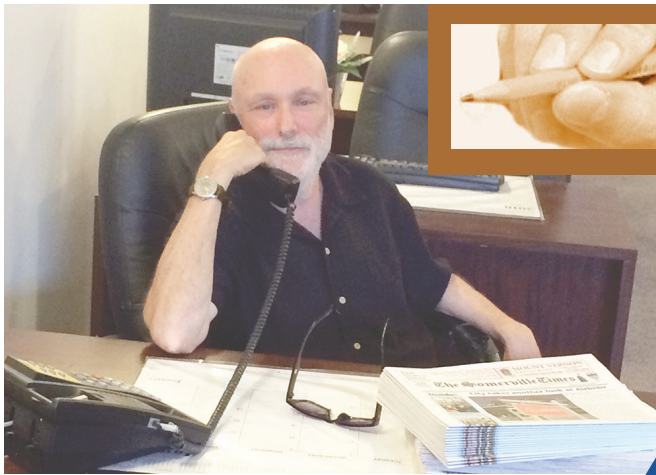
The **Rock + Roll Yard Sale** is coming to **Union Square** this fall, curated by **What Cheer?**. Taking place on **Sunday, September 7**, with a rain date of Sunday, September 14. This event will feature 40 to 50 carefully selected local vendors offering an eclectic mix of vinyl records, vintage clothing, handmade goods, artwork, and more. 12 – 5 p.m., **Union Square Plaza**.

**SYS** is proud to announce that **TOP-Soccer** will be coming to our community beginning in **September**. This program for players with mental and physical disabilities will make an incredibly positive impact on our families. The registration link and other information will be available at [www.somervillesoccer.org](http://www.somervillesoccer.org). For more information on TOPSoccer, please visit <https://mayouthsoccer.org/events-and-programs/topsoccer/>.

As the next step in realizing **Somerville's Master Plan** to transform the city's **Armory building** into a public community arts center, the **Ballantyne Administration** is sharing phase one application guidance for interested prospective arts tenants. For more information on Phase One guidance and future Armory Master Plan updates, visit [voice.somervillema.gov/armory-master-plan](http://voice.somervillema.gov/armory-master-plan).

On **September 13**, the **Gilman Square Arts & Music Festival** will be back to highlight local artists, makers, performers, and food vendors. This event is supported by the **Somerville Arts Council** and is made possible by an LCC grant, the generous support of local businesses, and volunteers from the **Gilman Square Neighborhood Council**. **Saturday, September 13**, from 12 to 5 p.m. (severe weather date: Sunday, September 14), located on **Pearl St. from Marshall to James Street**. Raindate, Sunday, September 14.

The **Somerville Mobile Farmers Market** has returned for the 2025 season. The market will be open **Thursdays through Saturdays**, and will run **through November 1**. All produce is sourced from local farms and priced affordably to make healthy, fresh food accessible to all. The mobile market accepts *Continued on page 23*



## OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

## Somerville writer Lesley Pratt Bannatyne sings her 'Lake Song'

Recently, I caught up with Somerville writer Lesley Pratt Bannatyne to talk about her new book *Lake Song: A Novel in Stories*. Bannatyne is best known for her books about Halloween, but she is also an accomplished fiction writer, as evidenced by her new book.

**Doug Holder:** How has it been for you as a writer in Somerville, after all these years?

**Lesley Pratt Bannatyne:** Being in Somerville—it's been 36 years, give or take—is something I almost don't think about until I go somewhere else. What's amazing about this city becomes clear. Years ago, when Robert Goss, Gary Duehr, and I wanted to stage a theatrical walking tour of a Somerville neighborhood, complete with fireworks! It was the city of Somerville that gave us the green light, firefighters, and its blessing. Where other cities saw only headaches, Somerville (and here I include both the city officials and audiences) was game. When poet Denise Provost and I proposed to display "locally sourced literature" at the Davis Square Farmer's Market, they said sure, and we were able to set up a table to introduce shoppers to books by Somerville writers (of which there are an incredible number!). Somerville Library, too, gave us space to hold a Somerville Readers and Writers Festival not long ago. Maybe it's because we live so close together that this can happen, or maybe it's because we have awesome organizations here. Whatever the reason, it makes this city a place where new ideas flourish, and that can only be good for creativity.

**DH:** Your new book takes place in the Finger Lakes region of upstate NY from 1906-2006. Why did you choose this time frame?

**LPB:** I wanted to tell a story about the long tail of trauma; about generations connected through events and place, and how the past colors the present. The



sweep of the 20th century seemed right for it. I could draw on history and culture to create a very real time and place so that readers feel they're on familiar ground. Bootlegging, the Kennedy assassination, space missions, the rise of spiritualism—these all ride in the background of the book. The characters and plot, though, are completely invented.

**DH:** A body of water, Okisee Lake is a symbol, and in a way, a major character in this book. How does this lake center the story? Does it connect people? Does it seal their fate?

**LPB:** I was on Revere Beach recently – the waves are so mesmerizing, and endless. Our ocean here makes us feel its vastness. A lake, I think, makes you feel held. When I was trying to imagine a place that would support the small community of Kinder Falls, I chose a place I know deeply, which

*Continued on page 23*

# Lyrical

## SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Vijaya Sundaram was the Poet Laureate of Medford, MA (2023-2025). Her first collection of poems, titled *Fractured Lens*, was published in August 2023 by Červená Barva Press. She is also a singer-songwriter, guitarist, and sitarist. In her capacity as full-time English faculty, she teaches college writing, poetry, literature, and American Culture in the English Dept. at Bunker Hill Community College



### Where the Moon Rises ...

©December 19th, 2023

Where the moon rises in a land I've made,  
Amidst fields of ferns and flame-like flowers,  
Midst black trees and green skies  
Silvered streams and purpled mist,  
There shall I go and swoon  
In the hearts of ruby-red poppies.  
Oblivion will shed sweet slumber  
On eyelids awash in silver and white  
And of the world's blood, not a speck  
Will remain. And the numberless dead  
Will walk my way, and find peace here.  
Where the world finds rest from  
Empty hate, and endless grief,  
There shall I go, and lie  
And lay my head  
On a pillow of blue and green  
And dream my life away.  
This is my place.  
But should you stumble into this world,  
Step in with moonlit feet, with  
Breath so hushed, the green won't stir;  
You will be welcome. You may lie  
On the other side of that moon,  
And not say a word to me,

Seek your own dream, your own slumber.  
I shall not mind if you find yourself  
In this secret, sacred space.  
I will sense you, and smile,  
Dreaming of clouds and childhood  
Under streaming sunshine  
On mango leaves, in a rain-damp land,  
Saturated in sound and light.  
This is what I will see,  
And this is where I shall be  
When the moon rises in this land I've made  
Where shadows shift like people  
Through greenlit glades  
And people shift among shadows

Unseen, delayed before dissolving,  
To sleep one last time in beauty.  
(In this land you'll be welcome,  
But soft! Step in with love,  
Step in, absolving your Self,  
Forgiving the other world, as you  
Gaze around you with clean eyes,  
Drunk with delight at simple things.  
You'll be welcome in this world,  
If you step in on moonlit feet.  
And I will shift in my slumber  
Smile, and dream another world  
For another day, another life.

— Vijaya Sundaram

Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 19

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 18-22, the House met for a total of one hour and 25 minutes and the Senate met for a total of one hour and 27 minutes.

Mon. August 18 House 11:01 a.m. to 12:09 p.m.  
Senate 11:16 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.

Tues. August 19 No House session

No Senate session

Wed. August 20 No House session  
No Senate session

Thurs. August 21 House 11:01 a.m. to 11:18 a.m.  
Senate 11:06 a.m. to 11:39 a.m.

Fri. August 22 No House session  
No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at bob@beaconhillrollcall.com

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 21

cash, debit, and credit cards, SNAP, Fresh Connect, WIC Farmers Market Coupons, and Senior Farmers Market Coupons. For locations and the full schedule, weekly produce updates, and more information about programs and events, visit the market's website at somervillemobilefarmersmarket.org.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Somerville High School Class of 1980 Reunion Social is taking place Saturday, October 4, from 7 to 10 p.m., 230 Mishawum Rd., Woburn, MA. Checks should be made out to SHS Class of 1980, c/o Mary Ellen Melaragni, 9 Churchill Circle, Winchester, MA 01890, wasmith1492@gmail.com.

\*\*\*\*\*

Join Union Square Main Streets and 60+ of your favorite local food producers for the 21st Annual Union Square Farmers Market. Shop local Saturdays through October 25, except September 20, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the Union

Square Plaza. Thanks to their partnership with the City of Somerville and the Somerville Farmers Market Coalition, they are proud to continue to offer our SNAP match. For more info, visit union-squaremain.org/2025-season.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Davis Square Market is open for the 2025 Season. The market will run every Wednesday from 12 noon to 6 p.m., through November 26, at 44 Day St., Somerville. This long-running market features over two dozen Massachusetts farmers and food producers offering a vibrant selection of delicious produce, protein, baked goods, ready-to-eat meals, alongside a host of other locally made products. The market accepts cash, credit/debit cards, WIC/Senior coupons, and EBT cards, and offers a weekly \$15 SNAP Match. Visit https://www.massfarmersmarkets.org/davis.

\*\*\*\*\*

Street sweeping in Somerville resumed

on Tuesday, April 1. The street sweeping season runs from April 1 until December 31 each year. The penalty for not complying with street sweeping parking regulations is a \$50 fine. Check the signs on the streets where you park and visit www.somerville-ma.gov/sweeper for more information.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

Through the generosity of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and under the direction of Mayor Ballantyne, the Council on Aging can provide Durable Medical Equipment at no cost to Somerville residents. Residents with a documented need for medical equipment must be over the age of 60 or have a permanent disability, and must be otherwise unable to afford or access needed medical equipment. They currently have available: Commodes, Bath Benches, Rollator Walkers, Incontinence Supplies, and Transport Wheelchairs. For additional information or for an application, please contact Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

\*\*\*\*\*

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Off The Shelf CONT. FROM PG 22

is the Finger Lakes in west central New York State. Oki-see (a fictional lake loosely set on Keuka) holds a collective memory, I suppose, and stands in as a repository for all the history that's happened on its shores. The lake is both the site of the tragedy that begins the book and the symbol of hope that ends it.

DH: The setting is a small town in rural New York. There seems to be a Spoon River Anthology or Our Town vibe in the book, but on a much more visceral level. Is a small town a great microcosm of our society at large?

LPB: I imagine that most things in the society at large can be reflected in the interactions of neighbors in a small town. But this book is character-driven more than ideological. These folks are farmers, grifters, miners, driving instructors, lovers. They set fires, read tarot cards, sell Avon, build houses with their own hands. Putting them in a small town is like putting them in a pressure cooker. Things heat up quickly in a small town.

DH: Are you from a small town? How much research did you do?

LPB: I'm from a suburb of Bridgeport, CT. But my connection to upstate New York is lifelong. My grandparents bought a cottage there when they were newlyweds, and I've visited every year since I was born. It's given me a good taste of rural life. You need a grocery store? 12 miles. You want something to do? Climb up a creek. Catch a fish.

The research I did was focused on specific historic events that had an impact on the characters. Yes, the Klan was active in New York state in the 1930s (and before and beyond that). Yes, companies from all over the US tried to drill gas out of the shale underneath this part of our country. The 1965 East Coast blackout, our country's first major electrical outage, is very real, and many were terrified it was a Russian attack, or aliens. Yes, there was a gang called the Albany Ketchup Mur-

derers. I love finding details in the historical record that add color to a story.

I originally got interested in this part of New York state because it birthed an unusual number of utopian communities and religions: this was where Joseph Smith Jr. received the golden plates that would become the Book of Mormon. Shakers have a history here, the Millerites (who believed the world would end in 1843), and of course, Spiritualism. It's a fascinating place, and it seemed rich with possibilities.

DH: Why should we read this book?

LPB: Lake Song is a multigenerational saga set around the Finger Lakes in rural New York, and it's gently haunted. If anything about that intrigues you, I think you should read this book.

I'm thrilled it won the Grace Paley Prize for short fiction, and thrilled it's now out in the world (thank you, Mad Creek Books).

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