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## Somerville Media Center celebrates its grand opening in high style



The grand opening of the Somerville Media Center's new facility drew several notable attendees.

— Photos by Jesse Buckley

The Somerville Media Center (SMC) held a grand opening and ribbon cutting event on Wednesday, February 26, to celebrate its first brand-new community media facility in 42 years.

Over 100 guests attended a special invitation-only grand opening event featuring remarks from Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Board President Joseph Lynch, and Executive Director Sean Effel, and followed with tours of the new studio facilities. Several elected officials, including four Somerville mayors, attended the event along with board members, staff, members, and other longtime supporters of SMC's work.

SMC left its longtime home in 2023 when the city-owned building was declared unsafe to occupy and relocated to a temporary space on the Somernova campus. After securing a lease *Continued on page 4*

## Prospect Hill Acedemy Boys Basketball wrap up their season

Prospect Hill Academy Charter School Boys basketball finished their season hosting and winning the first round of MIAA State D5 Tournament. Some other accomplishments to mention are, it was their first MCSAO Championship game they played in since 2011 (14years ago) and Dennis Orellana made Coach of the Year for the second time. Their league is split in 2 divisions North and South and they were Regular Season Champions for North Division. Here are some reflections about the season from the Athletic Director, Coach and players.

### From Athletic Director:

"The boys' varsity team showed a great deal of growth throughout the season, culminating in the programs first MIAA tournament victory and gaining valuable experience. They'll be returning many of their key contributors next year *Continued on page 12*



The Prospect Hill Academy Charter School Boys basketball team took pride in representing their school in the MIAA State D5 Tournament.

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Join the City and Somerville Public Schools at **2025 Summer Camp and Activities Fair**. The fair will be held on **Thursday, March 6**, from 5 to 7 p.m., at the **East Somerville Community School gymnasium** (50 Cross St.). Get information on Somerville's summer camps, recreational activities, and learning opportunities. Pizza and fun activities will be provided. Learn more at <https://somervillehub.org/>.

\*\*\*\*\*

Don't forget to **set your clocks forward** this weekend. On **Sunday, March 9**, **Daylight Savings Time** starts. When local standard time is about to reach Sunday, March 10, 2:00 a.m., clocks are turned forward one hour to Sunday, March 10, 3:00 a.m. local daylight time instead. There will be more light in the evening.

\*\*\*\*\*

Join **city staff** for an **Asian tea party and workshop on rodent control**. Learn how to identify rats on your property, methods for prevention, and city resources that can help. The workshop will be conducted in English, Mandarin, and Cantonese. This event will be held on **Monday, March 10**, at the **Ralph and Jenny Center** (9 New Washington St.) from 2 to 3 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

Happy birthday this week to the following: At the very top of the list of birthdays this week, we wish a very happy birthday to our own Editor, **Jim Clark**. We wish him a very happy year ahead and we hope he enjoys his special day. He deserves it. *Continued on page 7*

## Somerville Weather Forecast

for the week of MArch 5 – March 11 as provided by the National Weather Service

DAY	CONDITIONS	HIGH/LOW	PRECIPITATION	HUMIDITY	WIND
<b>Wednesday</b> <i>March 5</i>	Cloudy	55°/50°	17%	10%	SW 15 mph
<b>Thursday</b> <i>March 6</i>	Cloudy	56°/31°	22%	14%	SW 12 mph
<b>Friday</b> <i>March 7</i>	Sunny	43°/31°	1%	1%	NW 19 mph
<b>Saturday</b> <i>March 8</i>	Partly Cloudy	44°/25°	8%	5%	W 14 mph
<b>Sunday</b> <i>March 9</i>	Partly Cloudy	39°/26°	13%	9%	NW 13 mph
<b>Monday</b> <i>March 10</i>	Partly Cloudy	45°/28°	9%	4%	NW 13 mph
<b>Tuesday</b> <i>March 11</i>	Partly Cloudy	51°/40°	2%	1%	WSW 12 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: *Lyrical Somerville – February 12*

Karen Klein says:

Thanks for your poem, Dennis. Thomas Merton's book Seven Storey Mountain was one of the formative books I read in my late adolescence.

### Response to: *Somerville's Path Forward in a Shifting National Landscape*

Sara lennox says:

Much appreciated, thank you Mayor Ballantyne!

### Response to: *Obituary: John T. Connelly*

Steve Keenan says:

I am very sorry to hear of John's passing. He was a very dedicated member of the Somerville Auxiliary Fire Department and was a true Son of Somerville. RiP, John.

Steve Keenan-SFD Retired

### Response to: *Somerville and Chelsea file lawsuit to protect sanctuary cities*

TheoNa says:

When someone who does not live in Chelsea or Somerville receives a parking ticket they are unable to avoid paying the ticket because of cooperation between other government agencies. The car owner would not be able to renew their license or registration until the tickets were paid. How would those sanctuary cities react if the state and other communities decided that Chelsea and Somerville have unfair ticketing policies and they were going to grant sanctuary to those ticketed in Chelsea and Somerville? I'm willing to bet that they would be screaming about the lack of cooperation.

Log onto [TheSomervilleTimes.com](https://TheSomervilleTimes.com) to leave your own comments

## The Somerville Times

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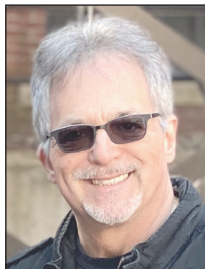
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Life in the **VILLE** by Jimmy Del Ponte

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

# Davis Memories



Since the ruining of Davis Square is looming, I thought I'd do what I do best, reminisce. My pal Ron Bargoot had this photo on a Facebook group: "Somerville

the good old days."

My best memory of Davis Square was being in the movie theatre while a train rumbled by.

Here are our friends' comments:

"I grew up in Somerville loved it but I moved up north to Somerville north. Now called Tewksbury. I see people I grew up with all the time in the post office. But I drove in Davis Sq. for the first time in years. I almost got lost. And I drove Green Cab for over twenty years."

"A 25 story building doesn't belong in

Davis Sq.! Crazy!"

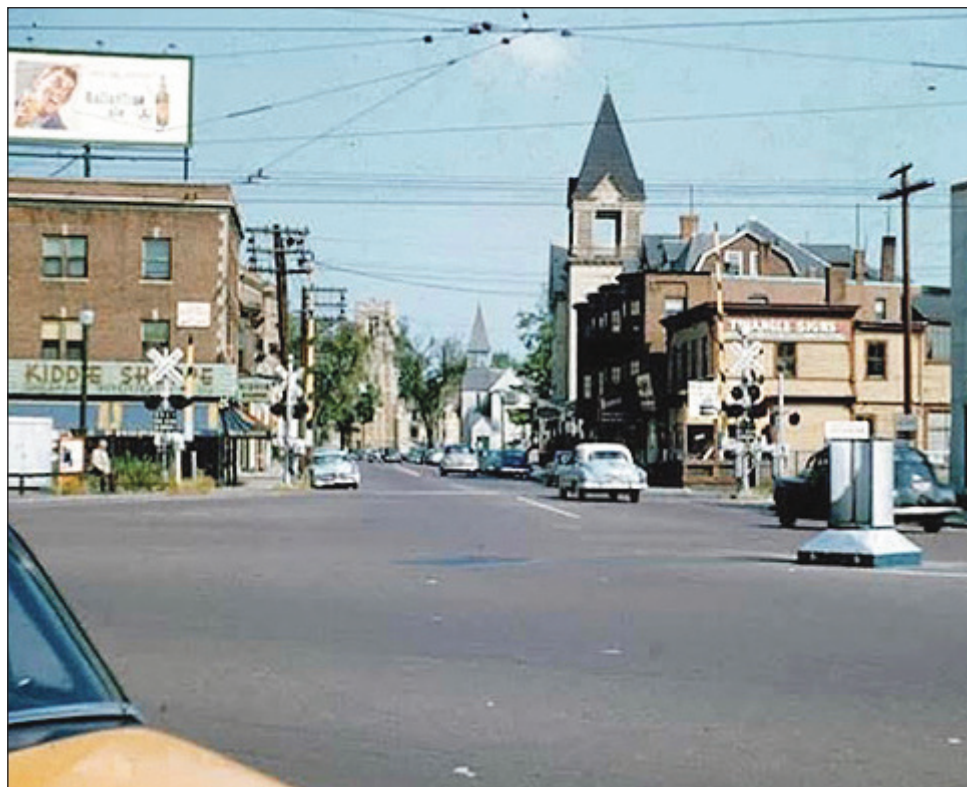
"Park Snow, Grants, Woolworths, Thomm McCann shoes, and Gorins department stores. All great stores that we shopped at in the 70's."

"I'm so disgusted by what's happening. What is Davis Square without McKinnon's and The Burren? And 25 stories is way out of proportion. It almost seems unsafe to have something that tall in the middle of a residential area."

"Going to school at the Western back in late 1970. Going to the movies and the Rosebud in the 1980s. I loved living in SOMERVILLE!"

Who would have thought there would be such a drastic change to our beloved Davis Square?

I guess we should just enjoy it while we can. In the meantime, check out this photo of old Davis Square.



## Somerville families invited to 2025 Summer Camp and Activities Fair

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and Superintendent Rubén Carmona are inviting Somerville families to the 2025 Summer Camp and Activities Fair.

Families can enjoy free pizza while exploring a variety of local summer camps, recreational programs, and learning opportunities. Representatives from regional camps and organizations, including the Somerville YMCA, City of Somerville Recreation Department's Somertime Program, and the Somerville Media Center, along with many others, will be in attendance. Language interpreters will also be available on site.

The fair will be held on Thursday, March 6, from 5 to 7 p.m., at the East Somerville Community School gymnasium (50 Cross St.)

"We are thrilled to once again host the Summer Camp and Activities Fair," said Chris Hosman, SomerPromise Director for the City of Somerville. "It is as much about community building as it is about increasing access to programming."

"The Summer Camp and Activities Fair is a wonderful reminder of how students can continue to grow and learn over the summer months," says Ruth Santos, Director of the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC). "It's a fun and lively event where families can meet providers face-to-face, ask questions, and find out more about the great programs available locally."

The Summer Camp and Activities Fair is a collaborative effort between the SFLC of the Somerville Public Schools and SomerPromise. To learn more about this event, visit the Somerville Hub at [www.somervillehub.org](http://www.somervillehub.org) or contact the SomerPromise Wraparound Services Manager, Lara Versari at (617) 625-6600, x 2346 or [lversari@somervillema.gov](mailto:lversari@somervillema.gov).

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## Somerville Police Dept Crime Log February 18 – 25

### Shots Fired

25010429: On 2/25/25 at approximately 12:05 a.m. Somerville Police responded to the area of Broadway and Alewife Brook Parkway for a report of shots fired. On scene, officers recovered several shell casings. Investigation is ongoing at this time.

### Assault

25010085: On 2/23/25 at approximately 2:01 a.m., Somerville Police responded to Nashua St. for report of an assault. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he was at a business on Broadway and was punched in the face by a bouncer. The victim suffered injuries to his eye and nose.

### Residential Breaking and Entering

25009680: On 2/21/25 at approximately 1:25 a.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Paulina St. for report of a past breaking and entering. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the residents who stated they left the apartment to watch a hockey game and when they returned, observed the apartment in disarray. Nothing was reported missing.

### Residential Breaking and Entering

25010202: On 2/23/25 at approximately 7:48 p.m., Somerville Police responded to a residence on Walnut St. for report of a breaking and entering in progress. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the victim who stated he was in his room and heard his dog barking. He then observed a male party inside the apartment who then fled out a window. The victim reported a small container with loose change and jewelry was stolen.

**Other Crimes:** 3 Bike Thefts + 2 Car Breaks + 2 MV Vandalisms + 1 Package Theft + 1 MV Theft

— Somerville Police Department



## Crime Tip Hotline: 617-776-7210

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

Thank you for your assistance.

### Help Keep Somerville Safe!

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Text a Tip to the SPD from anywhere!

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Simply text the phone number "TIP411" ( 847411 ) and put "617spd" at the beginning of your text message. If your message requires an emergency response PLEASE DO NOT TEXT and instead call 9-1-1.

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## Somerville Media Center celebrates its grand opening in high style

CONT. FROM PG 1

on 4800 sq. ft. of commercial space from the owner of Rafi Properties, SMC engaged an architecture firm, general contractor, specialty vendors, and video engineers to bring its new home at 29 Properzi Way to life.

Governor Healey posted a special congratulatory video as well: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aQ3xEGzzwt74N-JR5YQwOJMB9CXhzPUtK/view?usp=sharing>.

Looking ahead to the future, Somer-

ville Media Center is preparing to relaunch programs and services for the community, including providing residents with access to over \$170,000 of new production equipment, three recording studios, brand new training

and education programs, as well as expanding the depth and scope of its after school and summer programs for children in Somerville.

Go to <https://www.somervillemedia.org> to learn more about SMC.



# Councilors pass home rule petition in hopes of ending forced broker's fees in Somerville

By Harry Kane

Renters are eagerly awaiting news from the Massachusetts State House following a decision by the Somerville City Council after a home rule petition was passed to eliminate renter-paid broker fees.

The city has submitted a home rule petition to the Massachusetts State Legislature for consideration. If approved by both the Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate, the Governor will sign the bill into law.

"We now have a beautifully crafted home rule petition that went under a lot of scrutiny and discussion," said Ward 2 City Councilor J.T. Scott during the February 27 City Council meeting.

The home rule petition is a method for municipalities to request special legislation or exemptions to solve local issues. This is part of a regional collaboration between Somerville, Cambridge and Boston.

"Our Office of Housing Stability drafted this home rule petition because the cost to move into a new apartment at median rent, including a realtor's fee, can reach approximately \$14,000, a number that's out of reach for many," said Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne.

The new legislation would require that broker fees in the City of Somerville be paid by the party who solicits a licensed broker, according to the petition.

"With 65 percent of Somerville residents renting their homes, we must continue exploring every option to help stabilize housing costs and reduce barriers to securing housing," said Mayor Ballantyne. "I applaud the City Council for advancing this petition. Ensuring an equitable and affordable rental market is critical to keeping Somerville a place where people of all incomes can live and thrive."

Renters are usually required to pay a broker fee, which may be the equivalent of a month's rent, plus first and last month's rent and security deposit, according to the petition.

"This is an incredible barrier to entry for residents and an incredible barrier to re-

tion," said Councilor Burnley, Jr. at the February 27 City Council meeting.

The median rent for all bedroom counts and property types in Somerville as of March 2025 is \$3,200, which is roughly 60 percent higher than the national average, according to zumper.com.

That website also says that the average rent for a 1-bedroom in Somerville is roughly \$2,650 and a 2-bedroom is roughly \$3,300.

Cost-burdened renters are spending 30 percent of their income on rent, according to The Boston Foundation's 2024 Greater Boston Housing Report Card.

Councilor Burnley Jr. wrote on Instagram that he and other City Councilors joined forces with Cambridge and Boston in "taking a stand against the exploitative practice of forcing renters to pay for brokers that they did not hire."

The affordable housing crisis is a hot-button issue in the city, and it has become increasingly urgent for low-income families and occupants citywide to save what they can.

"It would just be an incredible relief to a lot of people in our community if we could just make it a little bit easier to rent and live in our community," said Councilor Burnley, Jr.

The collective effort made by Somerville, Cambridge and Boston to end forced broker fees "may be able to speed up the process" in regard to statewide legislation, added Councilor Burnley, Jr. in a telephone interview.

According to a press release from Governor Maura Healey's Administration on January 13, the Commonwealth plans on proposing an end to renter-paid broker fees in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

"Broker fees are an unfair cost for renters, and they should not be on the hook to pay for someone they didn't hire," said Governor Maura Healey.

Last session, the Massachusetts Senate included language in the housing bond bill that would end forced broker fees, but the proposal was not included in the House's version.



**ANNOUNCEMENT**  
**315 Broadway, in conjunction with Micozzi Management**  
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**Affordable Rental Open Waitlist Opportunity**

**The application period for a one-bedroom (1BR) Affordable Rental Waitlist will begin on 2/14/2025 at 2pm and end on 3/14/2025 at 2pm.**

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Income	\$91,200	\$104,200

**Eligibility Requirements**

- The rental unit must be used as the renters' primary residence.
- Income and residency restrictions will apply throughout tenancy. Income eligibility will be reviewed annually.
- Head of households claiming full-time student status are not eligible.
- Total Household Liquid Assets cannot exceed \$75,000

**Applications will be available beginning on 2/14/2025 at 2pm.** To obtain an application, please contact **Micozzi Management** and reference **"315 Broadway 80%"**

**Telephone: 617-254-5576 ex 112 or email: [eburkart@micozzimanagement.com](mailto:eburkart@micozzimanagement.com)**

**Completed applications** must be submitted to Micozzi Management at [eburkart@micozzimanagement.com](mailto:eburkart@micozzimanagement.com) or mailed to **159 Cambridge Street, Suite 2, Allston, MA 02134** by **3/14/2025 at 2pm.**

Applications received after the deadline will not be added to the waitlist. All qualified applications will be ranked by date and time received. All mailed applications will receive a 7-day grace period.



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# Beacon Hill Roll Call



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Beacon Hill Roll Call can also be viewed on our website at [www.thesomervilletimes.com](http://www.thesomervilletimes.com)

**THE HOUSE AND SENATE:** *Beacon Hill Roll Call* records local senators' and representatives' votes on roll calls from the week of February 24-28.

## \$425 MILLION FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE (EA) SHELTER SYSTEM (H 61)

House 127-23, Senate 32-7, approved and Gov. Maura Healey signed into law a fiscal 2025 supplemental budget that includes \$425 million to fund the state's emergency shelter system and make some changes to tighten eligibility for it.

The vote was almost strictly along party lines with all Republicans voting against it and all but four Democrats voting for it. The Democrats say the measure makes major reforms. The Republicans say while the bill includes some reforms they have long sought, it does not go far enough, and they all voted against it.

The bill allows families to stay for up to six months in shelters and grants the Secretary of Housing and Livable Communities the authority to grant hardship exemption waivers to families with young children, to families at risk of domestic violence, or other individuals in vulnerable circumstances, to lengthen their stay in shelters. It also caps capacity in the system at 4,000 families for the period Dec. 31, 2025 through Dec. 31, 2026. There were more than 6,000 families relying on the system at the end of January.

Another provision provides that benefits be given to families consisting entirely of residents of the commonwealth who are citizens of the United States or persons lawfully admitted for permanent residence or otherwise permanently residing in the United States under the color of law, except in cases where a child in the family is a citizen of the United States, a person lawfully admitted for permanent residence or a person permanently residing in the United States under color of law.

"This supplemental budget includes critical improvements that I proposed to reduce the taxpayer costs of the family shelter system and make it safer for residents and our communities," said Gov. Healey. "We all know that urgent action is needed to lower the cost of the system and make sure it is a viable, safe and temporary option for Massachusetts families who have fallen on hard times."

"We struck a balance between our fiscal responsibility to Massachusetts taxpayers and our moral obligation to moms, dads and kids who are in a difficult moment," said Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland). "We prioritize Massachusetts families in need, ensure transparency in the program, and take strong steps to ensure

the safety of those in shelter."

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

"I voted against the latest version of the \$425 million supplemental budget because it represents an unsustainable expansion of the shelter system without accountability or a tangible long-term plan," said Sen. Kelly Dooner (R-Taunton). "This budget is fiscally irresponsible and fails to prioritize homeless veterans, seniors and vulnerable families in Massachusetts who are still struggling to find shelter. We need practical solutions that prioritize our most vulnerable residents first."

"The Emergency Shelter System is broken in very significant ways," said Rep. John Gaskey (R-Carver). "House Republicans attempted to ensure the system was for Massachusetts families and veterans but Democrats are more concerned with the criminal illegal aliens they have welcomed and protected while many rape, murder and steal.

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

Rep. Christine Barber	Yes
Rep. Mike Connolly	Yes
Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven	Yes
Sen. Patricia Jehlen	Yes

## ADOPT JOINT HOUSE-SENATE RULES FOR 2025-2026 SESSION (H 206)

House 128-23, adopted joint House-Senate rules on how the Legislature operates for the 2025-2026 session. The Senate has already approved its own version of joint rules and the House version now goes to the Senate for consideration.

The vote was strictly along party lines with all Democrats voting for the package and all Republicans voting against it.

Provisions include requiring joint committees to provide and then post online plain-language summaries of all bills in time for their hearings; requiring committees, when reporting a bill favorably, to provide a document

showing any changes made by the committee to the underlying bill and any changes the bill makes to existing law; and requiring all testimony given to committees to be made publicly available in a manner to be determined by each committee.

Other provisions include prohibiting committee members from participating in a hearing remotely and requiring that they be physically present at a hearing in order to participate; allowing the public to testify remotely at a hearing; requiring how each individual member votes on polls conducted by the committees to be posted online; and extending the time allowed for formal sessions in the first year of the session from the current third Wednesday in November to the third Wednesday in December.

The second year of formal sessions will continue to end on July 31, but under the new rules, the House and Senate would be allowed to return to a formal session to act on reports of conference committees formed by July 31, budget bills and gubernatorial actions including vetoes of items in conference reports.

"There are many things in our rules package that align closely with the Senate proposals," said Majority Leader Rep. Mike Moran (D-Boston). "The House went even further to alleviate the logjam of bills at the end of the session by requiring that bills be voted out of committee in a timely manner after a public hearing. And our constituents will know exactly how the members of a committee handle the bill process when we post hearing attendance and committee votes online. These are meaningful reforms."

"I opposed the Joint Rules package because it did not go far enough in reforming the legislative process to improve transparency and public access," said Rep. Steven Xiarhos (R-Barnstable). "We need stronger measures to prevent last-minute legislating behind closed doors and to guarantee a more open, deliberative process."

(A "Yes" vote is for the new joint rules. A "No" vote is against them.)

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

## ADOPT HOUSE RULES FOR 2025-2026 SESSION (H 204)

House 128-23, approved a set of House rules under which the House will operate in 2025-2026.

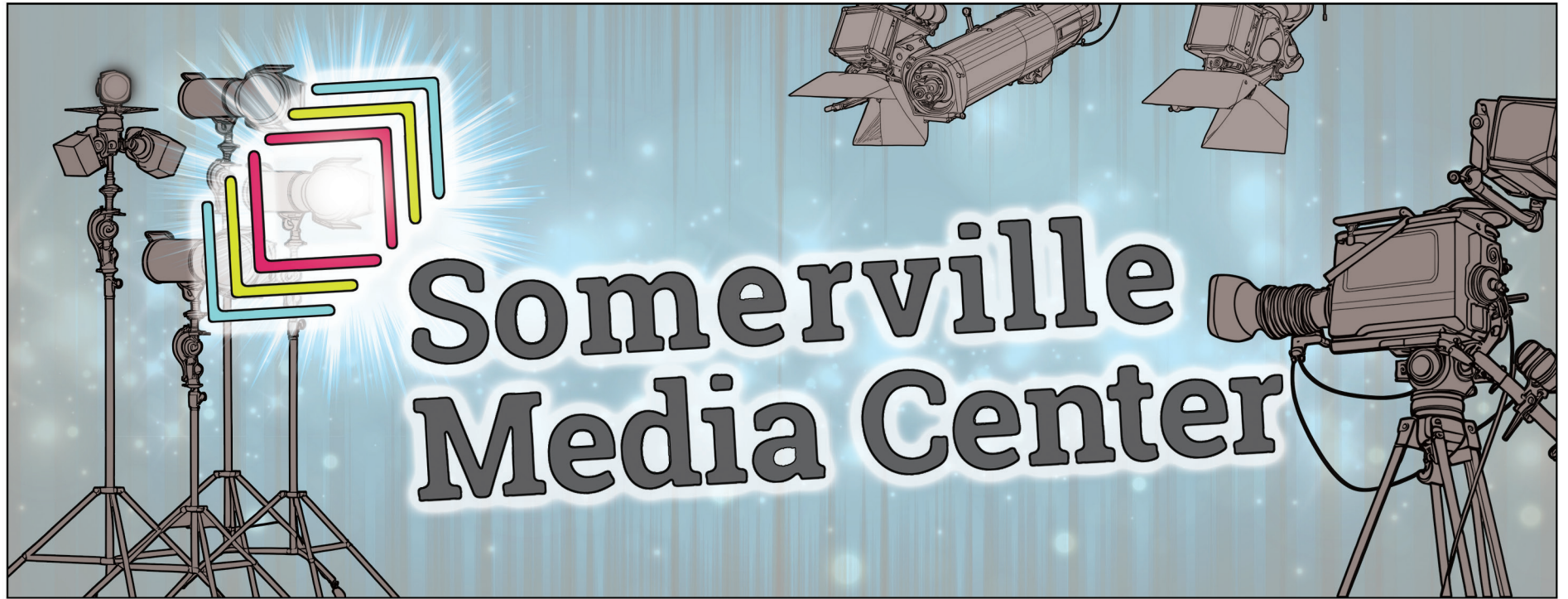
Provisions include requiring, to the extent practicable, summaries provided by committee

*Continued on page 16*

# COMMENTARY

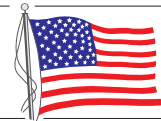
## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Illustrated by Jim Clark



Congratulations to Somerville Media Center on its new facilities Grand Opening.

## Our View Of The Times



Somerville Media Center (SMC) recently held its Grand Opening event to celebrate its relocation to 29 Properzi Way. We congratulate them on the successful transition to their new location and on their many years of service to the city.

SMC started in 1983 as the first community access television station in Massachusetts. Thirty-eight years ago, at the direction of then-Mayor Eugene Brune, the

City of Somerville renovated the former firehouse in the center of Union Square to create television studios to be run by the community. SMC was the site of the first national teleconference for the deaf, the first cable access lesbian soap opera, and some of the earliest panels on transgender youth.

It was also the starting point for such treasured recording artists as Tracy

Chapman, and it remains the home of the longest continuously produced access show in the United States, Dead Air Live. We are now SMC, with an internet radio station (Boston Free Radio) and a thriving youth program.

Their new computer lab and podcast studio are operational and already providing service to members. Their new and luxurious conference room has already

hosted meetings for staff and board of directors. Next online will be, their hot set mini-studio and full-sized main studio. Registration is open for 2025 Spring Youth Programs, visit <https://www.somervillemedia.org/>.

For more information about SMC, its new facilities, and currently available programs, visit them online at [https://www.somervillemedia.org](https://www.somervillemedia.org/).

### Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 2

Happy birthday to real estate agent and former Somerville resident **John Pratti**. We hope John has a great birthday. Happy Birthday to **Donald Coutoumas**. We wish him the best. We wish all of our Facebook friends, **Betsy Bragg, Scott Naugler, David Rudolph, Bob Schofield, Shu Tai, Jackie Levy Harrington** and **Patrick Callinan** a very happy birthday. To all those who are also celebrating this week, we wish a happy birthday.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Coffee Chat with Ward 5 elected officials this Saturday, March 8. Senator **Pat Jehlen**, State Rep. **Erika Uyterhoven**, City Councilor **Naima Sait** and

Ward 5 School Committee member **Laura Pitone** will be at **Zaruma Gold Coffee**, 37 Woodbine St. in Somerville from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Stop by and bring your questions and ideas or just stop by and say hello.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Centro Presente** invites you to commemorate **International Women's Day** and help them amplify the voices of immigrant women and girls. Share with them the work you do to defend and protect the rights of immigrant women and girls. **International Women's Day Rally** will be held on **March 8** at 11:00 a.m. in front of the MA State House.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Somerville Little League 2025 Spring registration** is open. Go to [www.somervillelittleleague.org](http://www.somervillelittleleague.org) to register.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The **Somerville Arts Council's ArtBeat 2025 Calls for Talent** are now available. The **Somerville Arts Council** invites musicians, street performers, circus artists, installation artists, buskers, craft vendors, and more to participate at **ArtBeat 2025**. Festival date and new time: **Saturday, July 19**, 1 – 9 p.m. (Rain date: Sunday, July 20), **Davis Square**, Somerville. The main festival will take place from 1 to 7 p.m., but music and food will continue in

**Seven Hills Park** from 7 to 9 p.m. Visit <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/art-beat/calls/>.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The **Somerville Police Department (SPD)** has produced a list of **unclaimed bicycles** that are currently being stored at SPD headquarters located at 220 Washington St. Any owner of an unclaimed bicycle who seeks to reclaim it is encouraged to contact Somerville Police at 617-625-1600 as soon as possible. Bicycles remaining in the possession of SPD after 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 15, will be treated as municipal property and will be disposed of in any *Continued on page 21*

# FUN & GAMES

## Ms. Cam's Olio #964

Olio - (noun) A miscellaneous mixture, hodgepodge

1. When was the first Oscars ceremony held?
2. Which film earned Cher her Oscar for best actress?
3. Who was the first actress to win an Academy Award for Best Actress?
4. In what year was the first NCAA Division I men's basketball tournament held?
5. Who had the idea to create the NCAA tournament?
6. When is National Employee Appreciation Day?
7. When is International Women's Day?
8. When is Daylight Savings Time in 2025?
9. Whose face was said to have launched 1000 ships?
10. In the traditional rhyme, how many mice were blind?
11. Which instrument has 47 strings and 7 pedals?
12. How is white sugar converted into brown sugar?

Answers on page 14

### The Somerville Times Useless Facts of the Week

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

#### STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

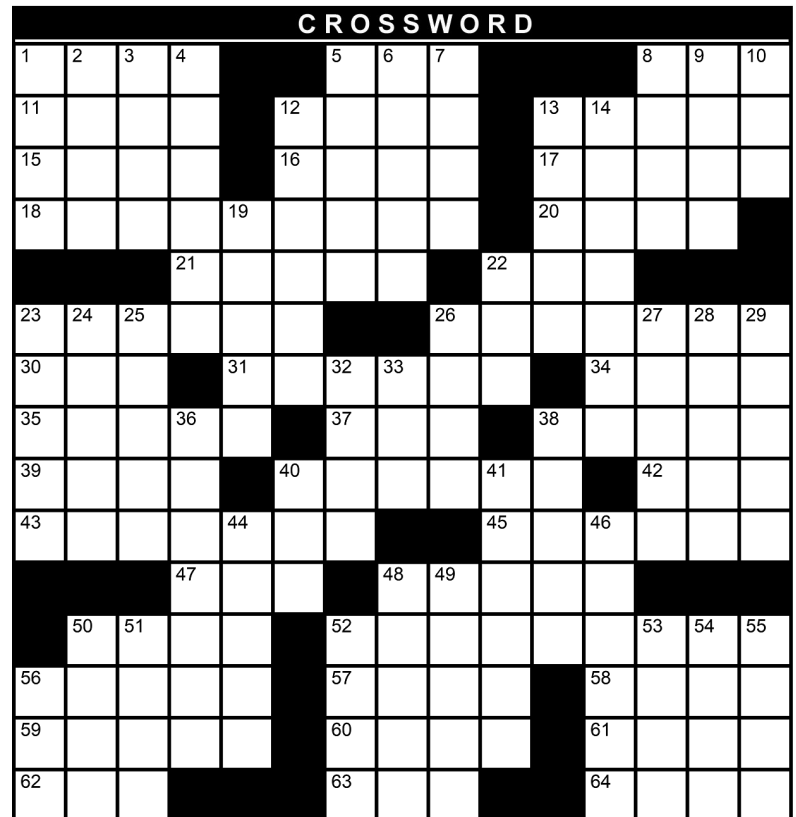
##### MARCH MADNESS

##### ACROSS

1. Giant Himalayan
5. M in MAC
8. Bathtub libation
11. Joie de vivre
12. Do like fly fisherman
13. East side of Jersey
15. Tucked in
16. Diva's solo
17. Length of a forearm
18. \_\_\_ Sunday
20. Osiris' wife
21. Freshwater fish
22. Stir fry pan
23. Victorian era overcoat
26. Smallest
30. Like attending band at the NCAA Tournament
31. Kaa of "The Jungle Book"
34. Great Lake
35. Prep mushrooms for steak, e.g.
37. Cooking fat
38. Bible song
39. Second to last word in some fairytales
40. False
42. Dip oreo into milk, e.g.
43. Tiresome
45. Hoariest
47. NBC's sketch comedy show
48. Misrepresent
50. South American monkey
52. 2025 NCAA Championship game venue
56. Renaissance fiddle
57. "To \_\_\_ and to hold"
58. \_\_\_-friendly
59. Founding Father Thomas \_\_\_
60. Damien's prediction
61. Reunion group
62. Bancroft to Hoffman in "The Graduate"
63. Agreement word
64. Ages and ages

##### DOWN

1. Nay opposers
2. River in Bohemia
3. 1.3 ounces, in Asia
4. Owes money (2 words)



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



5. Angelina Jolie's 2024 singing role
6. "Kick the bucket," e.g.
7. \_\_\_ Smith, coach of 2 champs and 11 Final Four teams
8. Mongolian desert
9. Fleur-de-lis
10. Cut down at end of last game
12. Like rheumy eyes
13. Descendant
14. 2024 winners
19. Thin pancake
22. \_\_\_ and move on
23. Cinderella's victory
24. Furlough
25. Spew, past tense
26. Cough syrup balsam
27. Use other end of pencil?
28. Farm structures
29. Dangle a carrot
32. \_\_\_-up or evenly matched game
33. Step on it
36. 2024 Most Outstanding Player Newton
38. Paralyzing disease, for short
40. Afghan monetary unit
41. Neolithic tomb
44. "Riunite \_\_\_\_, that's nice"
46. Figure out
48. Scapegoat's due
49. Roof overhang
50. Salty drop
51. Avian wader
52. Sailor call
53. Capital of Norway
54. Statistics calculation
55. Sea eagles
56. Dashboard acronym

Solution in the next edition of The Somerville Times.



**OBITUARY**

**John T. Connelly**



**John T. Connelly**, affectionately known as JC, of Somerville, passed away peacefully at Lahey Hospital in Burlington on February 24, 2025, at the age of 75.

Born in Boston and raised in Somerville, John was the beloved son of the late William F. and Rita (O'Sullivan) Connelly. A proud graduate of St. Clement High School, John spent his life-giving back to the community he loved.

John dedicated many years to public service, first as a member of the Somerville Auxiliary Fire Department, where he worked his way up to the rank of Deputy

Chief. His commitment to protecting others didn't stop there. John continued his career in public safety, serving as a Massachusetts State Firefighter at Cushing Hospital. His dedication to the facility was unwavering, and he remained a devoted member of the team until the hospital closed. During his time there, he was the Union President and an active member of the Massachusetts Retirees Association.

Beyond his work, John was known for his lighthearted spirit and his love for his family. As the fun and loving uncle, he would spoil his nieces with trips to McDonald's and teach them to eat their vegetables by playfully shooting them into the air. If he wasn't at home with his family, John could often be found cruising around Somerville in his beloved Crown Victoria.

Devoted brother of William

Connelly of Somerville, Lawrence Connelly of Malden and Robert Connelly of Somerville. Cherished uncle of Stephanie Connelly of Nashua, NH, Jennifer Stewart and her husband Brian of Framingham, Kathleen Ohlson and her husband David of West Chesterfield, NH and Sarah Blackwood and her husband Will of Medford. Dear brother-in-law of Catherine Connelly of Nashua, NH and Mary Connelly of Medford. Also lovingly survived by many loving friends and extended family members.

Visting hours will be held for John, in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home, 855 Broadway (Powder House Sq.) Somerville, Friday morning March 7, 2025, 10:00 – 11:30am, followed by a Funeral Home Service at 11:30. Relatives and friends invited.

Interment private.

**SHS Empty Bowls Project**

The Somerville High School Ceramics Program is holding their first annual Empty Bowls Project.

The Empty Bowls Project is a simple community meal of soup and bread to help remind people of the members of our community who are facing food insecurity. Choose a handmade ceramic bowl made by SHS student ceramic artists & fill it with delicious soups from local restaurants - before taking the bowl home to keep.

Funds raised will benefit Project Soup through the Greater Somerville Homeless Coalition. The event is open to the public. Tickets are available at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/shs-empty-bowls-project-tickets-1234037853439?aff=oddtcreator>

**WHEN:** Thursday, March 13, 5:00 - 7:00

**WHERE:** Somerville High School Culinary Restaurant (entrance through the Centennial Auditorium side entrance)

**CONTACT:** Taylor Byrne, [tbyrne@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:tbyrne@k12.somerville.ma.us)



**Dorothy's Corner**

BY DOROTHY DIMARZO



**St. Patrick's Day Recipes**

Here are a few recipes I shared over the years, all in one place! Whether you're looking to make shepherd's pie, soda bread, or colcannon, I've got you covered. Check out the links below. I know the traditional way of preparing the corned beef is to boil it, but I am sharing the way I prepare mine, in a not so traditional way, sous vide. It's the only way I prepare it now and I get rave reviews from friends and family. I have also included information on how sous vide works in a link below.

**Sous Vide Corned Beef**

1 2-1/2-3 lbs. Uncured Corned Beef\*

Remove packaging, and place the corned beef into a bowl of cold water. Make sure it is fully submerged. Let it

soak for 15 minutes. Drain the water and repeat. Pat dry and place in a sous vide bag, whether it's a reusable silicone bag or the more traditional food grade approved bags. Add the spice pack to the bag, seal it, and place in the water bath. I cook it at 140° for 48 hours. Once finished, remove from bag, pat dry, slice, and serve. \*I usually look for uncured corned beef, but if you use a cured corned beef, I highly recommend that you soak it in the refrigerator for 6 hours prior to cooking, changing the water 3 times. I find this necessary, so it's not too salty.

**Shepherd's Pie**

<https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/65836>

**Irish Soda Bread**

<https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/56820>

**Colcannon**

<https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/106700>



[com/archives/106700](https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/106700)

**Sous Vide**

<https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/79454>

[com/archives/79454](https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/79454)

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

## 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 General Contractors in General Building Construction and DCAMM Certified Filed Sub-Bidders in Painting for the Window Replacement Project at Weston Manor Apartments, Weston Avenue Somerville, MA 02144, in accordance with the documents prepared by SOCOTEC AE Consulting Inc. of Boston, MA.*

The project scope includes but is not limited to replacement of the existing windows on the west elevation of the Weston Manor Apartments at Weston Avenue Somerville, MA 02144. Additionally, the work includes abatement of the window caulking and preparation and painting of the existing railings.

The work is estimated to cost **\$ 658,037**.

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 of General Building Construction.

Filed sub-bidders must be certified by DCAMM pursuant to M.G.L.c. 149 Section 44D. The Filed sub-Bidder must be certified eligible in the DCAMM Filed Sub-Bid category of **Painting**.

Bid Forms and Contract Documents are available online after **2:00PM, Wednesday, February 26, 2025** at [www.Projectdog.com](http://www.Projectdog.com). Enter Project Code 867147 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.

Filed Sub-Bids for this project will be accepted from eligible bidders until **2:00PM, Friday, March 7, 2025** and will be publicly opened, forthwith online.

General Bids for this project will be accepted from eligible bidders until **2:00PM, Friday, March 14, 2025** and will be publicly opened, forthwith online.

General bids and Filed sub-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**.

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 Davis-Bacon Act Wage Determinations, 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.

## PRE-BID CONFERENCE / SITE VISIT:

Date and Time: **Monday, March 3, 2025, at 11:00 A.M.**

Address: **Weston Manor Apartments, 15 Weston Avenue Somerville, MA 02144.** Meet at the main entrance of the building.

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

Brian Langton  
Somerville Housing Authority

2/26/25, 3/5/25 The Somerville Times

City of Somerville  
PLANNING BOARD

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

## PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The **Somerville Planning Board (PB)** will hold a virtual public hearing on **Thursday, March 20, 2025**, at 6:00pm through Zoom.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting of the Planning Board will be conducted via remote participation. An audio recording of these proceedings will be available upon request to [planningboard@somervillema.gov](mailto:planningboard@somervillema.gov).

## TO USE A COMPUTER

Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_GZAHlvDRD6F4XuXfx-KdA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GZAHlvDRD6F4XuXfx-KdA)  
Webinar ID: 862 0331 2556

## TO CALL IN

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

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

- 120 Middlesex Ave** DWCH Assembly Row, LLC seeks a Major Amendment to a previously issued Master Plan Special Permit (MPSP2020-0003) in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use (ASMD) district.
- 33 Mystic Ave** Stellamoon LLC proposes to develop a six (6) story general building in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use district, which requires Site Plan Approval.
- 33 Mystic Ave** Stellamoon LLC seeks a waiver from the lot area dimensional standard in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use district, which requires a Special Permit.
- 33 Mystic Ave** Stellamoon LLC seeks a waiver from the floor area ratio (FAR) dimensional standard in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use district, which requires a Special Permit.
- 33 Mystic Ave** Stellamoon LLC seeks a waiver from the building height dimensional standard in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use district, which requires a Special Permit.
- 33 Mystic Ave** Stellamoon LLC seeks a waiver from the lot area per dwelling unit dimensional standard in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use district, which requires a Special Permit.
- 375 Harold Cohen Way** Street Retail, LLC, seeks a Site Plan Approval with Special Permit to develop an 8-story general building in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use District (ASMD) subject to Assembly Square Planned Unit Development-Preliminary Master Plan, Case # PB 2006-59 (as amended), and is seeking waivers for dimensions of maneuvering aisles, an updated TIS, a scale model, minimum parking requirements, and the right of first refusal.
- 375 Harold Cohen Way** Street Retail, LLC, seeks a Major Amendment to Assembly Square Planned Unit Development-Preliminary Master Plan, Case # PB 2006-59 (as amended), to incorporate Block 9 Design Guidelines for 375 Harold Cohen Way.

Development review application submittal materials and other documentation may be viewed online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/planning-and-zoning/reports-and-decisions>. Interested persons may provide comments to the Planning Board at the hearing or by submitting written comments by email to [PlanningBoard@somervillema.gov](mailto:PlanningBoard@somervillema.gov).

3/5/25 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, March 18, 2025** at 6:45pm on the following applications, in accordance with the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and/or the City of Somerville Code of Ordinances, Pt. II, Chap. 7, Sections 7-16 – 7-28.

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

## TO USE A COMPUTER

Registration URL:  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_0ELAcz7RRfOblm6gjnHfW](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0ELAcz7RRfOblm6gjnHfW)  
Webinar ID: 850 5165 3956

## 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)

## HP24-000125 - 8 Bolton Street

Applicant: Mazel Tov LLC – Julian Lewis  
Owner: Stephen Ober  
*The Applicant seeks to demolish a building that is at least 75 years of age.*

## HP24-000122 - 128 Central Street

Applicant: Pro Touch Home Improvements Inc. – Nilton Dornelas  
Owner: Nilton Dornelas  
*The Applicant seeks to demolish a building constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.*

## HP24-000120 - 199 Elm St

Applicant: Picker Construction- Pablo Picker  
Owner: Wisdom Publications  
*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.*

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## Legal Notice

The following vehicles will be sold  
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2015 Toyota Camry Vin# 4T1BF1FK4FU995627  
2005 Nissan Altima Vin# 1N4AL11D95C100533  
2015 Ford Escape Vin# 1FMCU9G9XFB32416  
2016 Hyundai Sonata Vin# 5NPE24AF3GH344705  
2005 Acura TSX Vin# JH4CL95875C023321  
To satisfy the debt owed to  
Cityside Enterprises Inc.  
617-776-6111

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Legal Notices can be downloaded from our website:  
[www.TheSomervilleTimes.com](http://www.TheSomervilleTimes.com)

LEGAL NOTICES

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



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**KATJANA BALLANTYNE**  
**MAYOR**

**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

The Somerville City Council's Land Use Committee and the Somerville Planning Board will hold a joint public hearing on **Thursday, March 20th, 2025** at 6:30 pm.

This meeting will be held in the Committee Room, on the 2nd Floor of City Hall, and by remote participation, using the Zoom platform. To attend and be heard, enter the link exactly as it appears below into your internet browser. You will then be asked to register for the meeting.  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9JmKt9Zkz9>

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

- John Fragione and Agostino Feola, Trustees of Frala Realty Trust, requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning district of 295-297 Medford Street and 93 Walnut Street from Mid-Rise 3 (MR3) to Mid-Rise 4 (MR4).
- Mayor Ballantyne requesting ordainment of an amendment to Articles 8 and 12 of the Zoning Ordinance to establish a new Arts & Innovation sub-area of the Master Planned Development Overlay District
- Mayor Ballantyne requesting ordainment of an amendment to Articles 2, 3-6, and 9 of the Zoning Ordinance to revise the regulations for arts and creative enterprise, office, and residential uses.
- Mayor Ballantyne requesting ordainment of an amendment to Articles 6, 9, and 10 of the Zoning Ordinance to establish a new Research & Development zoning district.
- Mayor Ballantyne requesting ordainment of an amendment to Articles 2, 4-6, 8, and 9 of the Zoning Ordinance to revise the regulations for laboratory uses and buildings.

Zoning amendments may be viewed online by searching the Somerville City Council's [online meeting calendar](#) for the address or item number.

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

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**CITY OF SOMERVILLE**  
**PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**INVITATION FOR BIDS**  
**IFB25-42**

The City of Somerville, through the Procurement & Contract Services Department invites bids for:

**IFB 25-42 SIDEWALK REPAIRS FOR THE CITY**

The IFB package may be obtained online at <https://www.somervillema.gov/procurement> or from the City of Somerville's BidExpress page at <http://www.somervillema.gov/BidExpress> on or after: **Wednesday, March 5, 2025**. Sealed responses will be received at the PCS Department, Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA, 02143 or via Bid Express until: **Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 2pm.**

The City of Somerville reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive any minor informality in the IFB process.

Please email [jremy@somervillema.gov](mailto:jremy@somervillema.gov) for more information

**Jordan Remy**  
**Senior Procurement Manager**  
**617-625-6600 x3400**

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

**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

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

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

**TO USE A COMPUTER**

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9JmKt9Zkz9>  
 Webinar ID: 876 8370 3408

**TO CALL IN**

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

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

**11 Garfield Avenue** Julia Marsh Rabin seeks zoning relief to construct a two-story addition at the rear of the property with a roof deck, add a shed dormer to the existing roofline at the rear of the building, and construct an entry canopy above a rear entry door in an Urban Residence (UR) zoning district, which requires a Hardship Variance.

**11 Garfield Avenue** Julia Marsh Rabin seeks zoning relief to construct a Projecting Porch on a non-conforming building type in an Urban Residence (UR) zoning district, which requires a Special Permit.

**181 Pearl Street** 181 Pearl St. LLC seeks relief from SZO Section 2.4.5.b.i.a, regarding principal entrance requirements on façades, which requires a Hardship Variance.

**181 Pearl Street** 181 Pearl St. LLC seeks relief from SZO Section 4.1.16.a.i., regarding sidewalk width requirements, which requires a Hardship Variance.

Development review application submittal materials and other documentation may be viewed online at

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/planning-and-zoning/reports-and-decisions>.

Interested persons may provide comments to the Zoning Board of Appeals at the hearing or by submitting written comments by email to [ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov](mailto:ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov).

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The **Somerville Board of Health** will host a public hearing to allow community input on proposed tobacco/nicotine sales regulations. The hearing will be at the regularly scheduled Board of Health meeting on **March 20th at 6 P.M.**

Proposed changes to the regulations include barring the sale of tobacco products to a person born on or after January 1, 2005; establishing a definition for oral nicotine pouches and restricting the sale thereof; and establishing fines and penalties for violations of state and/or local laws.

Nicotine-Free Generation (NFG) proposes a definitive, streamlined approach to tobacco control. NFG policy prohibits the sale of nicotine products to anyone born after a chosen date (e.g. January 1, 2005). Sellers may continue to sell to those born before this date who may already use nicotine products. A copy of the draft regulations can be found at <https://www.somervillema.gov/events/2025/03/20/board-health-meeting-and-public-hearing>

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**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION –**  
**HIGHWAY DIVISION**  
**NOTICE OF A VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING**

**Project: Somerville – Bridge Replacement, Bridge # S-17-016,**  
**Webster Avenue over MBTA & BMRR**  
**Project File No. 611940**

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed project in Somerville, MA.

WHEN: 6:00 p.m., Thursday, March 20, 2025

WHERE: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events>

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project includes the replacement of Webster Avenue Bridge No. S-17-016 (3GF) over the MBTA & BMRR and reconstruction of each roadway approach between Prospect Street and Everett Street, exclusive of the intersections. In addition to the replacement of the bridge, Newton Street will be realigned west and east of the bridge, eliminating the skewed intersection by splitting the intersection into two “tee” intersections. Newton Street (West) will intersect Webster Avenue south of the proposed bridge and accommodate two-way traffic. Newton Street (East) of Webster Avenue will intersect with Webster Avenue north of the proposed bridge and remain one-way eastbound. The work along each section of Newton Street will be less than 500 ft in length.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented in the hearing.

Project inquiries, written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to [massdotmajorprojects@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:massdotmajorprojects@dot.state.ma.us) or via US Mail to Suite 7210, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Major Projects, Project File No. 611940. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days after the hearing is hosted.

This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email ([MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us)). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the hearing, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing.

This hearing will be hosted, or a cancellation announcement posted, on the internet at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events>.

JONATHAN GULLIVER  
 HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

CARRIE E. LALLALLEE, P.E.  
 CHIEF ENGINEER

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# PHA Charter School Boys basketball wins MIAA State Tournaments

CONT. FROM PG 1

and the future looks very bright.” Geoff Lerner

**Edward Nyasembi, Player of the Year 2x Captain 11th grader:**

“I liked the sense of togetherness and the bonds that were created during this season. Ever since open runs and the summer leagues, we saw each other more and more, which then led to us become closer, like family.

Something that stood out to me was the championship attitude that we had. Last year we missed out on the states by one game and lost a very close play-off game vs excel in the first round, and from that moment, the energy shifted. We weren’t going to have the same season that we had last year. We started helping our teammates off the floor immediately, clapping for them, encouraging them, and held them accountable, on and off the court. Essentially all the small details and on top of that, we all made sacrifices in order to benefit the team, small or little like missing out on job opportunities and spending time with friends and family. We accomplished and grew a lot because of that, individually and as a team, on and off the court. As a 3-year varsity player and 2x captain, playing for PHA means everything to me. From playing with our guys since I was little and seeing them evolve as player makes me excited for the future and what we can become.

My most memorable moment as a wizard was our game vs Roxbury Prep. We were down for majority of the game, but we kept it close. It was a back-and-forth game until the last minute or so where we had a game winning layup and steal. This

is my most memorable game because we had fought through adversity all season and when it matter, we came through by doing what we’ve been doing all season, by staying together.

No one thought that we could make it as far as we did, and it’s always been like that, no one believed in us but US. We won’t stop at a championship game appearance or 1 MIAA win, we’re coming for it all. it’s our time now. it’s time to make way for the kings of the north (MCSAO North Division Champs).”

**Pedro Hartmann 2x Captain 2x All Star 11th grader:**

“What I like about our season is that we stuck together. Our coach always said that championship attitude is by picking up your teammates from the ground or giving high fives and giving positive talk. We really took that advice, and it made us get to know each other more on a deeper level of things. It made all of us closer. We were all teammates but now we’re all brothers”

**Micah Crawford (10th grade) 2x All Star:**

“I liked playing with these guys, we build a brotherhood and did really good this season we had each other backs and helped each other through many obstacles.”

**Captain Senior Garrick Bell:**

“What I liked about this season was that we had championship attitude. Meaning diving for the ball, giving our teammates positive feedback, and making sure that the bench is also a part of the game. Without Coach D believing in us and pushing to where we came be, we wouldn’t have been far in the MIAA & MCSAO. This season



helped us build a stronger bond with our teammates and showed us the importance of PHA basketball. We went from being cordial and friends to brothers.”

**Dennis Orellana “Coach D” Player Alum C/O 2006:**

“This was fun. Last year was my first year as Head Coach Varsity, we had to battle a ton of adversity throughout the season, but adversity can make or break you. These kids are fighters and had to adapt, I knew they would, but more about when.

I am still processing the season but these kids, this team restored alumni connection and school pride in a major way, with most games packed out. I was pumped clinch-

ing MIAA states on Jan 30th but making the league championship was amazing, little sweeter personally, as I helped lead to our school 1st Championship as a player in 2006 but didn’t realize our last appearance was 14 years ago in 2011. This team had high goals but only 2 short on that list which were winning 2 championships.

This #PHAmily is special, and I know, it won’t hit them until later in life, how strong they are and they are going to be successful. It’s not about winning or losing but it’s the process that’s the victory. The bonds created is what truly last. The culture forming is exciting and can’t wait to continue having fun and the work in the future! #PHAmilyOn6”



# SHS 2024-2025 Winter Sports Roundup

**2024-2025 GREATER BOSTON LEAGUE CHAMPIONS: Girls Basketball**

32 Student-Athletes named Greater Boston League All-Stars

2 GBL MVP's: Julian Zielinski (Swim) and Kerby Luxama (Track) and 2 GBL Coaches of the Year: Ricardo Bonhomme (Girls Basketball) and Dave Dickerson (Indoor track and field).

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association Tournament Information (MIAA):

**Girls Basketball:** Lost to 29-64 to Silver Lake Regional High School in a hard-fought game in the preliminary round of MIAA Tournament play

**Boys Basketball:** Lost 45-64 to a strong Hopkinton High School team in the preliminary round of the MIAA Tournament

**Ice Hockey:** Hosted and won 3-2 in the preliminary round of the MIAA Tournament vs Assabet Valley Technical High School. The team advanced to the Round of 32 where they lost 1-8 in a hard-fought game to Medfield High School.

**Greater Boston League All-Stars and Team Records for the Winter Season**

♦ **Boys Basketball:** (Record 10-11) The boys' basketball team had a season full of grit and resilience, showing their determination all year. After a tough 1-7 start, they battled back, turned their season around, and earned a spot in the MIAA State Tournament. Their perseverance and hard work paid off, making this a season to be proud of.

**GBL All-Stars: Thomas Griffin and Julian Goodridge**

♦ **Girls Basketball:** (Record 13-8) The girls' basketball team had a fantastic season, finishing with a 13-8 record, winning

the Greater Boston League Championship for the first time in 11 years, and qualifying for the MIAA Tournament! Their hard work, determination, and teamwork were on full display all season long. With such a strong foundation in place, the future of the program remains bright with a talented group of underclassmen.

**GBL All-Stars: Regan Antonelli, Nora Gamache, and Dyanna Grant Johnson**

**Coach of the Year: Ricardo Bonhomme**  
♦ **Swim:** (Record 7-3-1) This year, the team had 10 GBL All-Stars, which is a huge accomplishment for the team. The league voted senior Julian Zielinski as both the boys' team MVP and the league MVP, which is a great achievement for him and the program.

**GBL All Stars: Julian Zielinski, Charlotte Johnson, Elle Gys, Oliver Wicks, Coco Brown, Madeleine Zucca, Van Easter, Soleil Bryant, Odin Evenhus, Lillis Ekbladh**

♦ **Ice Hockey:** (Record 11-11) The ice hockey team showcased tremendous toughness all season long, making it a year to remember. Two standout players, Chris Cassesso and Matthew DeAngelis, reached an incredible milestone, both joining the 100-point club—an outstanding achievement! The team's hard work earned them a spot in the MIAA Tournament, where they hosted Assabet Valley Regional High School in the preliminary round and secured an exciting 3-2 victory. Advancing to the Round of 32, they faced off against #2 seed Medfield, battling hard but ultimately falling 8-1 in a tough matchup.

**GBL All-Stars: Chris Cassesso, Matthew DeAngelis, Timmy Jones**

♦ **Boys Indoor Track:** (Record 6-1) The boys indoor track team had another very



strong season with a strong mix of both upper and under classmen. The team was once again atop of the GBL. We had 6 boys qualify for the MIAA D3 championship meet. The team completed the GBL season as #1 in 55m, Hurdles, Long Jump, 600m & High Jump. Boy's GBL MVP, Kerby Luxama, tied the All-Time GBL record for the 55m dash and winning 3 events.

GBL All-Stars: Kerby Luxama (MVP), Jackson Love, Emmett Easton, Robert Leoni, Jake Barczy, and Mashruf Mahin

♦ **Girls Indoor Track:** (Record 6-1) The girls indoor track team also had another very strong season with a great core of runners. The team was also once again one of the better teams in the GBL. We had 15 girls qualify for the MIAA D3 championship meet. The team finished #1 or #2 in 55m, Hurdles, 1000m, Mile, Shot Put, High Jump, 4x400m, 4x200m & 4x800m. SHS girls ran the best time in a decade

with a rousing wire-to-wire victory in the signature 4x400m relay event that closed out the GBL championships meet!

**GBL All-Stars: Annabelle Scheider, Annika Bok, Anika Johnson, McCartney Reedy, Delia Ricardson, Marissa Luxama, Olivia Scamman, Eva Meli**  
**Coach of the Year: Dave Dickerson**

♦ **Cheer:** After a strong fall season, the cheer team continued their success this winter with the team placing 2nd at the 2025 Greater Boston League (GBL) competition. The team also came in 6th place at the regional competition at Billerica Memorial High School.

♦ **Middle School Girls Basketball:** (Record 5-6) The team made playoffs for a third consecutive year. There is plenty of talent and leadership on the team.

♦ **Middle School Boys Basketball:** (Record 0-10) The team was very competitive in all their games and worked very hard.



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Answers

From page 8

- |                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. May 16, 1929 | 7. March 8             |
| 2. Moonstruck   | 8. March 9             |
| 3. Janet Gaynor | 9. Helen of Troy       |
| 4. 1939         | 10. Three              |
| 5. Harold Olsen | 11. Pedal harp         |
| 6. March 7      | 12. By adding molasses |

# Traffic and Parking Committee explores solutions for mobility challenges

By Carlie Lombardi

On February 24, the Somerville Traffic and Parking Committee met to address important transportation and mobility issues impacting residents. The meeting covered a range of topics, from pedestrian safety and congestion to enforcement measures for traffic violations.

## Tackling idling trucks near senior homes

One of the first issues raised was the ongoing problem of large trucks idling on New Washington Street, behind the Cobble Hill Complex. The committee debated the installation of “No Idling” signs to address concerns from senior residents about air quality and noise. However, without the presence of the Parking Director, the matter was deferred for further discussion in a future meeting.

## Traffic congestion from construction and signal changes

The committee also addressed increased traffic congestion on Lombardi Street, Mystic Ave, and Grand Union Boulevard, attributed to the ongoing MassDOT bridge reconstruction projects. The road work, which has caused lane shifts and signal timing changes, is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

A major concern that was raised was the southbound I-93 down ramp, which feeds into the congested intersections, causing bottlenecks. Officials discussed potential signal timing adjustments to help with traffic flow issues and improve safety for both motorists and public

transit users.

## Pedestrian safety measures on McGrath Highway

With pedestrian safety a top priority, the committee revisited plans to install flex posts and other safety measures along McGrath Highway. These improvements aim to make crosswalks safer and prevent reckless driving.

However, some committee members questioned whether flex posts alone would be effective, advocating for more permanent concrete barriers. While MassDOT has not agreed to stronger interventions yet, officials committed to monitor the effectiveness of the changes and push for sturdier safety measures if needed.

## Addressing speeding and crosswalk gaps on Lowell Street

Residents have raised concerns about the lack of a safe pedestrian crossing at Bailey Park, particularly since the opening of the Green Line station. The committee discussed the possibility of adding a new crosswalk and speed bumps, but noted that the street’s steep incline and its role as a fire department emergency route present challenges.

City staff will conduct a traffic study this spring to assess speeds, sightlines, and necessary infrastructure changes before making a final decision.

## Transit signal priority for MBTA buses in Union Square

To improve bus efficiency, the committee reviewed plans to implement transit



A long-standing issue remains unresolved at Somerville High School, where drivers frequently violate the “no left turn” rule.

signal priority (TSP) in Union Square. This technology would allow MBTA buses to receive extended green lights, reducing delays at busy intersections.

The initiative is part of a broader MBTA Bus Network Redesign, which has already increased service frequency on major routes, including the Route 109 and Prospect Street corridor. Committee members expressed optimism that the project would be implemented later this year, easing public transit congestion.

## Cracking down on illegal left turns at Somerville High School

A long-standing issue remains unre-

solved at Somerville High School, where drivers frequently violate the “no left turn” rule. Despite existing signs and traffic calming measures, violations continue, raising safety concerns.

The committee emphasized the need for ongoing public education, particularly for parents, guardians, and staff. They also stressed that enforcement efforts must increase, and the issue will remain under discussion until the police department provides an update on its enforcement strategy.

The Traffic and Parking Committee will meet next on March 24.

# Fred Berman of OHS awarded citation at City Hall

By The Times Staff

The Somerville City Council and Mayor Katjana Ballantyne commended Fred Berman on his career with a citation on the eve of his retirement from the Office of Housing Stability.

Fred Berman dedicated more than 20 years to public service, including six years as Co-Deputy Director of Housing Stability.

“Fred’s advocacy has been instrumental in increasing affordable housing and preventing displacement all across Somerville,” said City Council President Judy Pineda Neufeld as she read from the citation at the February 27 City Council meeting.

Since opening OHS in 2018, they have

responded to almost 8,000 requests for assistance.

“OHS simply would not have been able to meet the overwhelming demand for services and be where we are today with a staff of 13 without Fred,” said Ellen Shachter, director of the Office of Housing Stability.

Shachter explained that Berman has helped hundreds of Somerville residents facing eviction or families at risk of housing loss.

“We have some very challenging clients and some very challenging cases and Fred will never give up on anyone,” Shachter said. “I know that Fred will never leave the battle for housing as a right for all, or for the fight for justice for marginalized com-

munities. It is simply in his DNA.”

Berman thanked former Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone and current Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne for embracing initiatives to help residents in need.

“It’s been a privilege to be part of a community that more often than not welcomes advocacy for affordable housing, for responsible development, and for programs, policies and resources that help neighbors in times of need,” said Berman.

Ward 3 City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen said that Berman is a “personal hero” of his. “You are a north star for myself, and I think for everyone in Somerville who cares about affordable housing.”



Office of Housing Stability retiree Fred Berman received a citation of recognition by the Somerville City Council.

## Beacon Hill Roll Call CONT. FROM PG 6

chairs of bills to be posted online before the House takes them up for a vote; prohibiting committee members from participating in a hearing remotely and requiring that they be physically present at a hearing in order to participate; allowing the public to testify remotely at a hearing; and requiring how each individual member votes on polls conducted by the committees to be posted online.

Other provisions include requiring 72-hours-notice before a hearing can be held; requiring members to be physically present to cast their votes, unless the member has active reserve military duty, a serious health condition or limitations related to a member's pregnancy, including pregnancy loss; and expanding a remote voting option for members for up to 20 weeks of parental leave.

"These critical reforms are representative of the House's strong commitment to the pursuit of a more accessible and efficient Legislature that is responsive to the concerns of our constituents," said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy). "We remain focused on the all-important responsibility of bettering the General Court as an institution, a goal that I know so many of my colleagues are committed to."

"Recognizing that there are ways we can make the legislative process more efficient, I am proud of this rules package," said Rep. Bill Galvin (D-Canton), Chair of the Temporary House committee on House Rules. "The reforms ... to govern both branches will help streamline legislative work in the current session, as well as provide the public with a greater understanding of where bills stand in the process."

"The House Republican Caucus offered a series of rules reforms to shed more light on the legislative process and the inner workings of the House, including a proposal to honor the will of the voters by allowing the state Auditor to conduct the annual financial audit of the House, but these ideas were summarily rejected by our Democratic colleagues," said Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). "The new House rules package includes some welcome reforms, but it still falls far short of achieving the full transparency needed to restore the public's confidence in state government, which is why I voted against it."

"I voted against the House rules package because it fell short of delivering the transparency and accountability the public deserves," said Rep. Steven Xiarhos (R-Barnstable). "The process should allow for more meaningful debate and input, ensuring all voices are heard rather than consolidating power among a few."

(A "Yes" vote is for the new House rules. A "No" vote is against them.)

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

### ALLOW STATE AUDITOR TO AUDIT THE HOUSE (H 2024)

House 24-127, rejected an amendment that would require the state auditor, currently Diana DiZoglio, to conduct an annual audit of the House. This requirement was approved by the voters on Question 1 on the November 2024 ballot. The amendment would replace a House rule that the state auditor would recommend a firm to conduct an annual audit of the House and the business manager of the House would hire that firm.

"In November of 2024, Question 1 was overwhelmingly approved with the support of nearly 72 percent of the state's voters who cast a ballot," said amendment sponsor Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). "This amendment would honor the will of the voters by allowing the state auditor to conduct these annual audits of the House in compliance with Question 1."

"Every city and town in the commonwealth voted for this question to be the law," said Rep. Marc Lombardo (R-Billerica). "Unfortunately, essentially on party lines, the House Democrats defeated the amendment and once again refused to comply with the will of the voters. Beacon Hill Democrats need to end this inter-governmental feud and finally respect the voters and give them the transparency they demand and deserve."

Rep. Michael Day (D-Stoneham) said this new rule would violate the separation of power in the constitution. He noted that Article 30 says the legislative department shall never exercise the executive and judicial powers, the executive shall never exercise the legislative and judicial powers, and the judicial shall never exercise the legislative and executive powers.

Day also noted that the House rule that requires the House to hire a firm recommended by the state auditor is sufficient.

(A "Yes" vote is for the amendment requiring the state auditor to conduct an annual audit. A "No" vote is against the amendment.)

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

### POST AUDITS ON LEGISLATURE'S WEBSITE (H 2046)

House 23-128, rejected an amendment requiring that if there are any audits of the Legislature by the state auditor, the results must be published on the Legislature's website in a conspicuous place within 72 hours of receipt.

"This amendment aligns with the House Republican Caucus' ongoing efforts to make the Legislature more transparent and accountable to our constituents," said amendment sponsor Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). "It simply requires that any audit of the House conducted

by the state auditor be posted in a conspicuous place on the General Court website within 72 hours of receipt, so it is readily available and accessible to the public."

"When 72 percent of our citizens are asking for more transparency, ensuring we post the audit within 72 hours would certainly be a step in the right direction," said Rep. Dave Muradian (R-Grafton).

Rep. Michael Day (D-Stoneham) said all audits are already posted on the Legislature's website. He noted that allowing the auditor to audit the House violates the separation of power in the constitution so there is no reason to require the posting of an audit that that likely will never happen.

(A "Yes" vote is for the amendment requiring the posting of an audit. A "No" vote is against requiring it.)

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

### KEEP COMMITTEE POLLS OPEN FOR TWO HOURS (H 2026)

House 23-128, rejected an amendment that would require joint committee polls to be open for at least two hours or until all committee members have voted. Committee polls are used to record which members favor or oppose a bill that was heard by the committee.

"When voting to advance legislation, it is important that the members understand the bill they're voting on so they can make an informed decision," said amendment sponsor Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). "That is not always possible with the short turnaround time required of some polls, especially when the bills under consideration have been redrafted, are lengthy, or are technical in nature. Providing a two-hour window to respond to a poll is a reasonable compromise that will help to ensure that each member feels comfortable with their vote without hampering the committee's ability to move legislation in a timely fashion."

"In Massachusetts, we have a full-time, professional Legislature, which requires preparation and preparedness," said Rep. Kathy LaNatra (D-Kingston) who opposed the amendment. "When a poll is released by a committee chair, that should not be the first time we are reading a piece of legislation. Committee polls should remain at the chair's discretion, ensuring decisions reflect urgency rather than arbitrary deadlines. Committees I have been on have provided days to review language. We must, however, always maintain our ability to act for our constituents when the time arises."

(A "Yes" vote is for the two-hour minimum. A "No" vote is against it.)

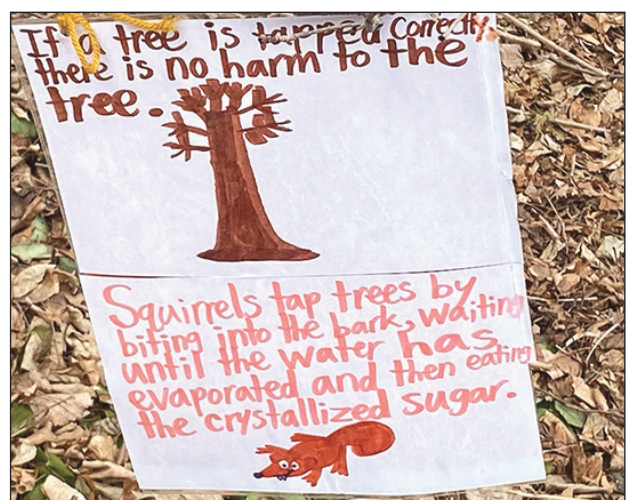
Rep. Christine Barber	No	<i>Continued on page 18</i>
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# Somerville Maple Boil Down 2025

The Somerville Community Growing Center held the 26th Annual Somerville Maple Boil Down, Saturday, March 1, 2025. A team of volunteers tapped a swath of maple trees on the Tufts campus beginning in late January, collecting dozens of gallons of sap over a number of weeks. At the Maple Boil Down, the sap was boiled down into real, true 100% hyper-local maple syrup. At the event, youth and adults alike had the chance to learn about tree anatomy and physiology and experience the process of making fresh maple syrup first-hand.

— Photos by Bobbie Toner



# Somerville unveils first-ever Cultural Capacity Plan

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, in partnership with the Somerville Arts Council and an extensive network of artists, cultural workers, and community members, is proud to announce the release of the Somerville Cultural Capacity Plan (SCCP), the city's first-ever comprehensive plan to strengthen, support, and sustain Somerville's vibrant arts and culture ecosystem.

"This plan is a commitment to our artists, our cultural spaces, and our identity as a city that values creativity and inclusion for all," said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. "Fostering our vibrant arts and culture scene is essential to Somerville's civic, economic, and creative vitality. With this plan, we are striving to ensure that we're not only protecting what we have but also building long-term support structures so our creative community can thrive for generations to come."

Years in the making, the plan is the result of deep community collaboration and inclusive leadership, ensuring that Somerville's artists, performers, and cultural organizations—particularly those from historically underrepresented backgrounds—have a seat at the table in shaping the city's creative future.

Through extensive engagement, the SCCP identifies the challenges facing the arts community and lays out a bold, actionable strategy to preserve affordability,

expand support, and foster cultural connections across the city.

**The SCCP focuses on five core objectives:**

- Preserving and developing affordable spaces for artistic and cultural production.
- Increasing funding and support for the arts sector.
- Strengthening connections and amplifying voices within the arts community.
- Catalyzing new initiatives led by artists and cultural leaders.
- Embedding arts and culture priorities into city policy and planning.

Putting these objectives into immediate action, the city is inviting Somerville musicians to two community meetings in March 2025, designed to specifically address challenges and opportunities within our local music ecosystem. Whether your priority is securing performance venues, affordable rehearsal spaces, recording facilities, or building stronger support networks, your voice matters. Meeting details will be shared as soon as possible.

"The SCCP is the culmination of years of listening, learning, and collaborating with our city's creative voices," said Gregory Jenkins, Executive Director of the Somerville Arts Council. "It is a reflection of the passion and dedication of our artists and cultural workers, and a tool to ensure

that Somerville remains a place where the arts can flourish."

The Somerville Cultural Capacity Plan is now available online at: [somer villeartscouncil.org/culturalcapacity](http://somer villeartscouncil.org/culturalcapacity) and [voice.somervillema.gov/cultural-capacity-plan](http://voice.somervillema.gov/cultural-capacity-plan)

The plan was informed by extensive public engagement. Outreach included community conversations led by Cultural Capacity Ambassadors, a group of artists and cultural leaders dedicated to ensuring an inclusive process. Their experiences and insights were critical in shaping the final plan.

**Cultural Ambassador Catherine Nakato shared:**

"Being a Cultural Ambassador for the Somerville Cultural Capacity Plan has been an incredibly rewarding experience. The process was not only inclusive but also deeply intentional in ensuring that artists and cultural workers from diverse backgrounds had a voice. Through this initiative, I've seen firsthand how collaboration and thoughtful planning can lead to actionable change.

I'm hopeful that this plan will not just serve as a roadmap but as a catalyst for empowering artists, fostering community connections, and preserving the cultural identity of Somerville."

**Cultural Ambassador Ajda Snyder,**

**shared:**

"As a Somerville resident, I am thankful to live in a city that is forward-thinking and proactively supportive of the arts enough to create something like the Somerville Cultural Capacity Plan. As a musician/artist, the plan and its creation process have made me feel seen, valued, and included. It is detailed, thorough, and nuanced yet dynamic and nimble, providing a roadmap for a successful partnership between city and community to preserve, protect, and bolster arts and culture in Somerville."

**Participant and local business owner Ethan Dussault, added:**

"The creation of the Fabrication District and the Arts and Creative Enterprise requirements in the City's zoning ordinance along with the Somerville Arts Space Risk Assessment document have proven to be invaluable tools for me as an arts advocate and as an owner/operator of a creative small business. Without them, folks like me may have already been displaced from the metro area. The new Cultural Capacity Plan is a welcome addition to this toolkit and it further exemplifies Somerville's leadership in the preservation and expansion of arts and cultural space.

For more information about the SCCP and upcoming opportunities for engagement, visit: [somer villeartscouncil.org](http://somer villeartscouncil.org).

## Beacon Hill Roll Call

CONT. FROM PG 16

Rep. Mike Connolly No  
Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven No

### ALSO UP ON BEACON HILL

**HOUSE AND SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TEAMS APPOINTED** - House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy) and Senate President Karen Spilka announced their leadership teams for the 2025-2026 legislative session.

The vast majority of the House leadership team remains the same including Rep. Michael Moran of Brighton as majority leader; Rep. Kate Hogan of Stow as speaker pro tempore; Rep. Alice Peisch of Wellesley as assistant majority leader; Rep. Frank Moran of Lawrence as second assistant majority leader; Rep. Danielle Gregoire of Marlborough as First Division chair and Rep. James O'Day of West Boylston as Fourth Division chair.

Mariano added two members to leadership positions: Rep. Paul Donato of Medford moves up into the second assistant majority leader post vacated when Rep. Sarah Peake left to work for the Healey administration; Rep. Jeff

Roy of Franklin took Donato's former position as Second Division chair and Rep. Carlos Gonzalez of Springfield got the Third Division chair job previously filled by retired Rep. Ruth Balsler.

Over in the Senate, Spilka kept her entire current leadership team intact including Sen. Cindy Creem of Newton as majority leader; Belmont's Sen. William Brownsberger as president pro tempore; Sens. Joan Lovely of Salem, Michael Barrett of Lexington and Sal DiDomenico of Everett will return as assistant majority leaders; West Roxbury's Sen. Michael Rush

### HOW LONG WAS LAST WEEK'S SESSION?

*Beacon Hill Roll Call* tracks the length of time that the House and Senate were in session each week. Many legislators say that legislative sessions are only one aspect of the Legislature's job and that a lot of important work is done outside of the House and Senate chambers. They note that their jobs also involve committee work, research, constituent work and other matters that are important to their districts. Critics say that the Legislature does not meet regularly or long enough to debate and vote in public view on the thousands of pieces of legislation that

have been filed. They note that the infrequency and brief length of sessions are misguided and lead to irresponsible late-night sessions and a mad rush to act on dozens of bills in the days immediately preceding the end of an annual session. During the week of Feb. 24-28, the House met for a total of ten hours and 24 minutes while the Senate met for a total of two hours and seven minutes.

Mon. Feb. 24 House 11:01 a.m. to 11:52 a.m.  
Senate 11:13 a.m. to 11:22 a.m.

Tues. Feb. 25 House 11:01 a.m. to 5:18 p.m.  
No Senate session

Wed. Feb. 26 House 11:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.  
Senate 1:04 p.m. to 2:40 p.m.

Thurs. Feb. 27 House 11:00 a.m. to 11:01 a.m.  
Senate 11:11 a.m. to 11:33 a.m.

Fri. Feb. 28 No House session  
No Senate session

Bob Katzen welcomes feedback at [bob@beaconhillrollcall.com](mailto:bob@beaconhillrollcall.com)

OBITUARY

Charlene M. (Paolillo) Vaughan (1969-2025)



Charlene M. 'Cha' 'Shi-Lene' (Paolillo) Vaughan of Somerville passed away on Sunday, February 16, 2025, after a lengthy illness surrounded by her family & friends at the age of 55. She graduated from the Somerville High School Class of 1987.

Born in Cambridge, Charlene was raised & educated in Somerville. She is the beloved daughter of Diana (Duarte) Paolillo and the late Anthony (Sonny) Paolillo. She is survived by her loving & loyal husband Harold E. Vaughan III, their son Harold E. Vaughan IV, and their fur baby Klova. She is also survived by her brothers Joseph Paolillo and his wife Denise of Medford, MA, Chris-

topher Paolillo of Somerville, MA, Mark Paolillo and his wife Lori of Derry, NH, and Eric Vaughan and his wife Marisa of Saugus, MA. She is also survived by many nieces, nephews, & extended family members as well as many dear friends.

Charlene was in the banking industry for 35 years and was well respected amongst her peers. Charlene's passions included spending time with her family & friends, traveling, going to concerts with Harry, and gambling at the casino. Her all-time favorite activity was laying by the pool in her backyard or at the beach.

Charlene will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved her.

Memorial services will be held on Friday, March 7, 2025, from 10am to 12pm at Boston Cremation, located at 287 Main Street Malden, MA. 781-322-0909

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN).

# Tax Tip of the Week

By Vincent Hicks, CPA

**Q: If my income is below the filing threshold, do I really need to file a tax return?**

**A: Even though you may not be required to file, doing so could result in a refund!**

Many taxpayers who aren't required to file still qualify for money back through:

- Refundable tax credits (like the Earned Income Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit).
  - A refund of federal income tax withheld from your paycheck.
  - State tax refunds that may not be obvious without filing.
- For 2024 tax returns, you generally must file if your income was at least:
- \$14,600 (Single)
  - \$29,200 (Married filing jointly)
  - \$21,900 (Head of household)
  - \$5 (Married filing separately)

**Bottom Line:** Even if your income is below these amounts, filing a return could still get you a refund—you might be owed hundreds or even thousands of dollars!



Have questions about your taxes? I'd be happy to help! I'm Vincent Hicks, a CPA based here in Somerville with over 20 years of experience. Feel free to email or call me at [vchicksconnect@gmail.com](mailto:vchicksconnect@gmail.com) (859-553-0788).

*Disclaimer: This column provides general tax information and should not be considered tax or legal advice. Tax laws change frequently, and individual circumstances vary. For personalized guidance, consult a tax professional.*

## Middlesex District Attorney's Office investigating three shootings within 12 hours

Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan has confirmed the ongoing investigation into three shootings that occurred across the communities of Cambridge, Somerville and Belmont within 12 hours.

"We have committed substantial resources over the past several years to address every instance of gun violence in this county through prosecution, prevention and legislative action. These shootings mark the most significant surge in gun violence here since 2022. The fact that over 50 shots were fired in very densely populated areas, some in the middle of the afternoon, is the type of brazen, dangerous conduct for which those responsible must be held accountable," said District Attorney Ryan.

On Monday, February 24, at approximately 2:15 p.m., a Cambridge Police Officer witnessed and immediately responded to a shooting incident in the area of Bishop Allen Drive and Columbia Street. The preliminary investigation suggests that a verbal altercation occurred between two parties who are not known to each other. During the altercation, a male wearing a mask fired multiple gunshots at the other party. No one was injured in the shooting.

Following the incident Cambridge Police were able to identify multiple juveniles suspected to be involved in the incident. One juvenile male was arraigned yesterday on charges of possession of a large capacity magazine and ammunition. A second juvenile has been charged with assault and battery on a police officer and defacing property for throwing an object at an officer and damaging items in the interview room at the Cambridge Police Department.

Also on Monday, February 24, at approximately 9:15 p.m., Belmont Police responded to a call of shots fired on Clark Lane. The preliminary investigation suggests that the victim and his son were outside an apartment complex when a vehicle sped by and open fire striking the man in the leg. Police recovered multiple pieces of ballistic evidence at the scene.

A few hours later, just after midnight on Tuesday, February 25, Somerville Police responded to multiple 911 calls of shots fired in the area of the Clarendon Towers, located on Broadway in Somerville. Upon arrival, officers discovered 47 shell casings and other ballistic evidence. The preliminary investigation suggests that a man, who was possibly targeted, was outside an apartment complex when a vehicle pulled up. Multiple individuals allegedly exited the vehicle and began firing in his direction.

The Middlesex District Attorney's Office is actively investigating all three incidents in partnership with Cambridge, Belmont and Somerville Police in addition to the Massachusetts State Police. Investigators are asking anyone with any information to contact their local police department or the Massachusetts State Police Detective Unit assigned to the District Attorney's Office at 781-897-6600.



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



**Q:** What actions violate the Fair Housing Act?

**A:** When you are dealing with member of a protected class and you:

- Refuse to rent, sell, or negotiate housing
- Make housing unavailable or deny a dwelling
- Set different terms, conditions, or privileges for sale/rental
- Provide different housing services/facilities
- Falsely deny housing is available for inspection, sale, or rental
- Make, print, or publish any notice, statement, or advertisement that indicates a preference or limitation based on a protected class
- Coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with anyone exercising a fair housing right or assisting others who exercise those rights.

*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.*

# Somerville through the eyes of Denise



Highland Avenue sunrise ...

— Photo by Denise Provost



## Are You Sitting On A Fortune?

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## BOBBY'S DAD JOKES CORNER

By Bobbygeorge Potaris



I only seem to get sick on weekdays.  
I must have a weekend immune system.

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our weekly specials!  
Call Jimmy 857-366-3761

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call  
**Bobbie Toner**  
**857-488-5138**

## On This Day in History

### March 5

- 1624 – Class-based legislation is passed in the colony of Virginia, exempting the upper class from punishment by whipping.
- 1912 – The Italians become the first to use dirigibles for military purposes, using them for reconnaissance flights behind Turkish lines west of Tripoli.
- 1918 – The Soviets move the capital of Russia from Petrograd to Moscow.
- 1933 – Hitler and Nationalist allies win the Reichstag majority. It will be the last free election in Germany until after World War II.
- 1943 – In desperation due to war losses, fifteen and sixteen year olds are called up for military service in the German army.
- 1956 – The U.S. Supreme Court affirms the ban on segregation in public schools in Brown vs. Board of Education.
- 1976 – Britain gives up on the Ulster talks and decides to retain rule in Northern Ireland indefinitely.
- 1984 – The U.S. Supreme Court rules that cities have the right to display the Nativity scene as part of their Christmas display.

Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 7

manner consistent with city surplus property and MGL c. 30B § 15, including but not limited to disposition at less than fair market value to a charitable organization..

Liam Mannion, proprietor of Sally O'Brien's, and former City Councilor Bob McWatters invite the public to celebrate Irish Heritage and hoist a pint of Guinness on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, at Sally O'Brien's, 335 Somerville Ave. Sally's will have plenty of corned beef and cabbage, Irish music and pints of Guinness flowing all day. Stop in and hoist a Guinness with Liam and Bob in honoring the patron Saint of Ireland. All are welcome to join the festivities.

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Ward 6 Councilor Lance Davis, Ward 5 Councilor Naima Sait, Ward 3 Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen, Ward 2 Councilor J.T. Scott, and city staff invite you to an open house to discuss proposed new quickbuild designs for Elm Street between Russell Street and Somerville Avenue, Somerville Avenue between the city line and Elm Street, Beacon Street between Somerville Avenue and Oxford Street, and Mossland Street. The event will be held on Monday, March 10, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the John F. Kennedy School Cafetorium, 15 Cherry St.

The Somerville Homeless Coalition's Amazon Wish Lists are updated monthly with the most requested items from their food pantry to meet the needs of their clients experiencing food insecurity. If you would like to learn more and donate through our wish lists, please see the link here: https://bit.ly/SHCLinks.

Community Health Worker Division Hours are held every other Thursday at Connexion (149 Broadway, Somerville, MA) from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. They will provide hygiene kits, snacks, and referrals to internal and external partners for the following services: ESL, Housing, SHC, SNAP and MassHealth. The next Community Health Worker Division Hours will be held Thursday, March 6.

Reminder: Return Your 2025 City of Somerville Census. Last month, Somerville's 2025 census made its way to resident mailboxes. Annual participation in the census is essential for keeping an accurate population count and it updates or maintains your status as an active voter

for upcoming elections. The 2025 census form also includes an application to vote by mail in Somerville's preliminary and city elections this year. Completed census forms can be returned via the postage-paid return envelope included in the mailing, by scanning the form and emailing it to census@somervillema.gov, or in person at City Hall (93 Highland Ave.). Please call 311 (617-666-3311) with any questions.

The annual Read by the River K-5 Literacy Carnival run by Tufts University Hillel is coming up on Sunday, March 9, 1:00-4:00 p.m., at the Joyce Cummings Center at Tufts University, 177 College Ave. Children in grades K-5 and their caregivers are invited to enjoy student-led literacy activities and meet a surprise guest.

The Somerville Commission for Women (SCW) seeks five members, and Somerville residents are encouraged to apply. The SCW serves as a centralizing force in the City of Somerville and the community which will deal with all women's issues providing information, referral, guidance, and more to public agencies and organizations engaged in activities and programs intended to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against women because of their status as women or minority women. All applications are due Friday, March 21. Interested candidates should submit a statement of interest by email to sflythe@somervillema.gov or by mail to Steven Flythe, Deputy Director, Department of Racial and Social Justice, City of Somerville, 167 Holland Street, Suite 208, Somerville, MA 02144. Please contact Steven Flythe at 781-808-7502 or sflythe@somervillema.gov with questions.

The Rás na hÉireann USA 5K, takes place, Sunday, March 16, at 11 a.m. Rás na hÉireann is the most genuine Irish race this side of the Atlantic. Everyone is invited to Somerville, all runners and walkers, to celebrate life, the coming of spring, and to enjoy a memorable race and St. Patrick's Day celebration. The Ras na hEireann U.S.A. 5Km is open to all, from beginners to international stars. To register visit: https://www.theraceofireland.com/.

Somerville's Council on Aging St. Patrick's Day Luncheon takes place on

Thursday, March 13, starting at 11:00 a.m. at the George Dilboy Post located at 351 Summer Street. \$10 per person. Join in for a performance by the Rebecca McGowan School of Irish Dance and a special meal (corned beef and cabbage). Reserve your spot for the event and lunch by calling Debby Higgins at 617-625-6600, ext. 2321.

Senior Fraud with the Dept. of Homeland Security takes place on Tuesday, March 25, at 10:00 a.m. at the Holland Street Center. Sean Garvey, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigation, will be doing a presentation on common frauds and will be available to answer questions on senior fraud. RSVP by calling Molly Pagliuca at 617-625-6600, ext. 2318 or email Molly at mpagliuca@somervillema.gov

Subscribe to the Somerville Public Library's email newsletter for monthly updates about the goings-on at the library. Subscribing takes less than five minutes, and if it turns out to not be your thing, unsubscribing is easy. Visit the linktree in our bio to sign up.

State health officials are informing the public that Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, which rarely infects humans, is suspected to be affecting wild and domestic birds in several Massachusetts municipalities. Here are precautionary steps you can take: Avoid handling birds and other wildlife and keep dogs and pets leashed and away from wildlife. Learn more and stay up to date on state guidance. https://www.mass.gov/news/state-officials-provide-updated-guidance-on-suspected-avian-flu-cases-reported-across-massachusetts.

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

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

Made In Massachusetts, a 3+ hour

chronological journey through over 100 years of filmmaking in Massachusetts will screen on Sunday, March 9, at 1:00 p.m. at the Somerville Theatre in Davis Square, Somerville. MIM features clips from over 200 movies and television shows shot in the state starting with films from the silent era and going all the way through 2024. Highlighting cities and towns from Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville to Concord, Martha's Vineyard, Great Barrington, and everywhere in between. Featuring stars from James Cagney, Elizabeth Taylor, Steve McQueen, and Paul Newman to Harrison Ford, Sandra Bullock, Ryan Reynolds, Kerry Washington, and all the Afflecks and Wahlbergs you can handle. Admission is free, with donations gladly accepted to support the Independent Film Festival Boston (IFFBoston). Q&A with filmmakers Adam Roffman and Vatche Arabian to follow.

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

Join the Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Ave, for their monthly recurring events this March. Somerville Winter Farmer's Market (Hall), Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Smut Slam, the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. WYRD Queer Comedy (Cafe), Friday, March 7, Silly Love Songs at 7:30 p.m. and The New Faces in Hell at 9 p.m. Nova Comedy Collective's Nebula Night (Cafe), Friday, March 14, at 8:00 p.m.; Atomic Comedy Indie Improv Night (Cafe), Thursday, March 20, at 7:30 p.m. and Show Me Your Bits Comedy (use code "arts" for 25% off ticket) (Cafe), Friday, March 21 at 7:30 p.m. More info available for each event on their website. https://artsatthearmory.org/upcoming-events.

# Learn about Somerville's upcoming Consolidated Affordable Housing Waitlist

The City of Somerville is launching a Consolidated Rental Waitlist to simplify the application process for income-restricted rental units. To help residents navigate the new system, the Housing Division will host a series of information sessions in March. The sessions will alternate between virtual and in-person meetings.

"We are committed to making the search for affordable housing as clear and straightforward as possible," said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. "This waitlist will simplify the process and reduce barriers for residents." The Consolidated Waitlist allows individuals and families to apply for multiple affordable rental opportunities with a single application. The application period opens in April 2025.

## Information Sessions

To make these sessions as accessible and convenient as possible, they are scheduled at a variety of times and formats, including in-person, virtual, and hybrid options, to accommodate different schedules and needs. Interpretation in Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole (Mandarin, Cantonese, Nepali, and ASL available upon request).

- ♦ Tuesday, March 18, 6 p.m. – Argenziano School Cafeteria (290 Washington St.)
- ♦ Thursday, March 20, 12 p.m. – City Council Chambers at City Hall (93 Highland Ave.) and Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85839137884#success>)
- ♦ Saturday, March 22, 9 a.m. – Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81192235706#success>)
- ♦ Monday, March 24, 6 p.m. – East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- ♦ Wednesday, March 26, 6 p.m. – West Somerville Neighborhood School Cafeteria, (177 Powder House Blvd.)

Multilingual resources and application support will be available throughout the application period. More details will be posted at [somervillema.gov/inclusionary](http://somervillema.gov/inclusionary). To sign up for updates, click the green box labeled "Affordable Housing Alerts: Sign Up Now."

## Newstalk CONT. FROM PG 21

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

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

**Know Your Rights Resources.** You can download a helpful packet of **Know Your Rights resources and information** in the language of your choice below. **Somerville Public Schools** have also created a list of resources on the **One Somerville Resource page**, which can be found here <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/district-departments/somerville-family-learning-collaborative-sflc/one-somerville-resources>

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.

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

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

**City Alerts** are a great way for those who live, work, or own a business in Somerville

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

With the days growing shorter and temperatures dipping colder, the **Somerville Homeless Coalition** is in critical need of new or lightly used jackets for their clients currently living outside. If you have any adult-sized coats hanging in your closet that you don't wear, please consider dropping them off at the Somerville Homeless Coalition admin office located at **255 Elm Street**, Suite 204, during the hours listed below. Drop Off Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., 2 – 5 p.m. Each coat donated provides warmth, dignity, and safety for our neighbors having to face the harsh New England winter conditions.

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

The **Somerville Winter Farmers Market** is back at the **Arts at the Armory**,

191 Highland Ave. on **Saturdays**, 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. **from November 2 to April 12**. The Center for the Arts at the Armory is proud to offer a weekly winter market with 71+ local food vendors with the best locally grown and regionally produced foods, including fresh produce, cheese, eggs, meats, fish, breads, tamales, pastries, chocolate, skincare products, and more. The market accepts SNAP/EBT and HIP benefits. They also offer a \$15 SNAP match to customers each week. More info is available on their website: <https://www.somwintermarket.org/>.

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

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



# OFF THE SHELF

by Doug Holder

## 'Plastic' by Scott Guild

*Plastic*  
by Scott Guild.  
Vintage Books, Penguin Random House, New York,  
2024

Review by Off the Shelf Correspondent Ed Meek

— Life is plastic. It's fantastic. (*Barbie Girl*)

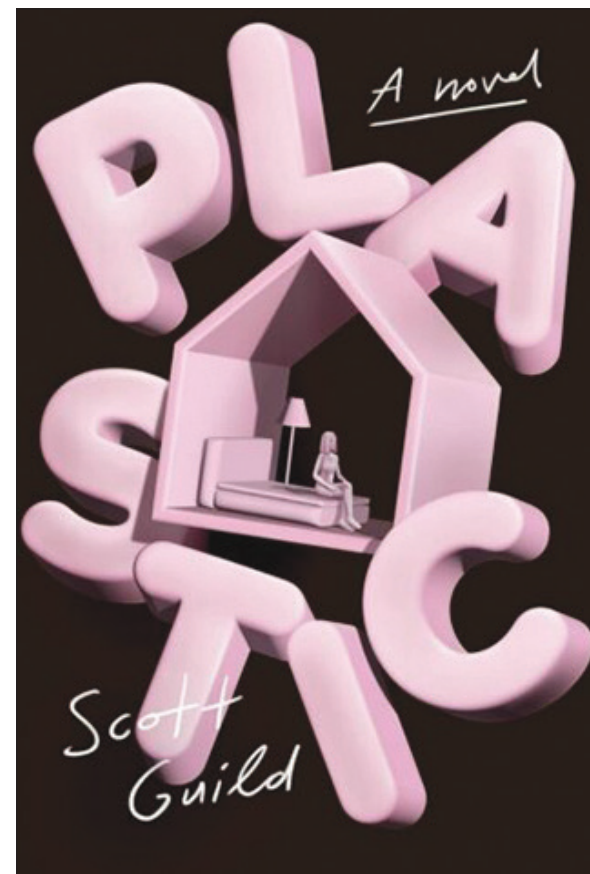
The multi-talented Scott Guild has created both a novel and an accompanying musical version of the novel. The novel focuses on live plastic figurines existing sometime in the not-too-distant future after nuclear war.

Guild is very inventive. He is adept at world-building and he presents us with a bizarro version of our current era of hyper-advertising, plastic everywhere and terrorist attacks. Yet, where we are talking about ways to try to diminish the role of plastic, in Guild's novel, the people are plastic. The main character, Erin, works at Tablet Town where she makes Smartbodies that enable the figurines to enter virtual worlds. Erin and the other figurines in the novel even have their own clipped, robotic language they use to converse.

The novel is told as if Erin is watching a movie: "The next scene opens on a slender kitchen." As the novel begins, we learn that Erin's boyfriend, Patrick, was murdered and that she is having a hard time dealing with it. The plastic figurines are routinely attacked by terrorists. Partly to escape her problems, Erin watches a show called *The Nuclear Family*, about a dysfunctional family that is blended with humans and waffles, parents who are always arguing and a son who is dealing with his feelings of homosexuality. The show has a laugh track which adds to its satirical tone.

Guild has an MFA from U of Texas at Austin and a PhD in English from U of Nebraska Lincoln. He worked on the novel and album over the course of ten years. The album has a new age sound to it and there is a music video. It can be found on Spotify. The combination of music and a compelling story seems like a natural fit for either an anime movie or a cartoon series. The novel is kind of a cross between "Klara and the Sun," the great novel by Ishiguro and *Barbie*, the movie.

Like *Barbie*, the novel is insistent on making points. In *Barbie's* case about the patriarchy, in *Plastic* about our current problems with terrorism and the break-down of the family, and the way our language is devolving through texting. Here is an exchange be-



tween Erin and Jacob, a character she befriends: "You worry she listen at door?" "She prob not. But it small apartment. No want hurt her feeling." After a while, this language becomes stilted and annoying like the way native Americans talk in old Westerns.

It is also difficult to read an entire novel written in the present tense. In addition, song lyrics are sprinkled through the book. When we read song lyrics in a novel, we can either read them as poetry or fill in our own music. She (Erin) sings into the void: "The day I bought a VR suit/to lose myself in dreams, /To flee the sorrows of my youth/Behind a Smarthead screen." Maybe this is a good song, but as stand-alone lyrics, it is something one just skims over.

John Gardiner, the novelist, talks about creating a fictional dream. When a novel is effective, the reader gets lost in the dream. Formatting a novel as if it is a movie and then having the main character watch a TV show that functions as a satire, commenting on our world and hers, using stilted dialogue, puts the reader's focus on the artifice. Like *Barbie*, the novel is a great concept. It is very clever, but unlike, *Klara and the Sun*, we are never really drawn into the world of the characters. Characters who are plastic but somehow still have to eat food. Plastic characters who die. Does this make sense? These would not be issues in anime or cartoons and that I think would be the best format for *Plastic*.

# Lyrical

## SOMERVILLE

edited by Doug Holder

Scott Ruescher's new collection of poems, *Above the Fold*, will be out from Finishing Line Press in March 2025. In his retirement, he has been writing promotional materials for The Neighborhood Developers in Chelsea and helping to teach ESOL and citizenship classes at The Immigrant Learning Center in Malden.



### La Teleraña

Underneath the epiphytic plants, nourished just by dust, that sprout  
In the limbs and branches of sun-stretched trees, underneath  
Bromeliads and orchids, for instance, in the jungle along the bank  
Of the Cuyabeno River, our indigenous Amazonian Siona guide, Andréa,  
Recited a litany of houseplants we grow indoors back home,  
Philodendrons, passion flowers, rubber trees, and heliconia,  
As she led us along a foot path, across the splayed roots of kapok trees,  
Over a fallen log (with scratch marks, she said, from a jaguar's claws),  
And through shady understory, past umbrella-like mushrooms,  
Feather-like maiden ferns, and rope-like liana vines that had climbed  
Into the heights of those kapoks from their roots in the ground.

Then we came to the spider web, some eight feet across, la teleraña,  
With which some enterprising arachnid, a colorful cupiennius  
Or a slender neotame, that lives on mosquitoes, butterflies, and gnats,  
Had connected two of those vines, whereupon Andréa advised us  
To step back and admire from a distance how the spider with a precise  
Geometrical grace worthy of a math teacher or a civil engineer  
Had filled that large space; how she'd managed to spin the cables,  
Both the radials extending from the hub and the spirals connecting them,  
Without losing the symmetry of the web, even as it sagged with a dew  
That sparkled at one or another place along a segment of silk thread  
For each of us at once when we squinted into the morning sun.

— Scott Ruescher

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