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SOMERVILLE/MEDFORD MASS.

Tuesday December 26th 2023

SOMERVILLE RELEASES STRATEGIC STUDY TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES AVOID COMMERCIAL DISPLACEMENT



NEWS TALK OUT LOUD/SPEAK UP



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SOMERVILLE NAMED ONE OF NATION'S DIGITAL INCLUSION TRAILBLAZERS

CITY OF SOMERVILLE ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT INCREASING SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD PAY AND BENEFITS



Somerville Police
Real Life Somerville
Police Stories Page



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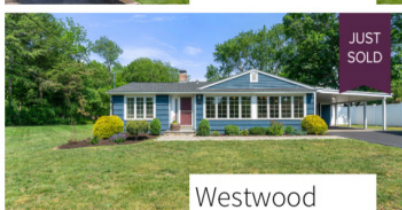
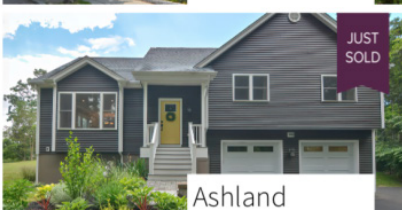
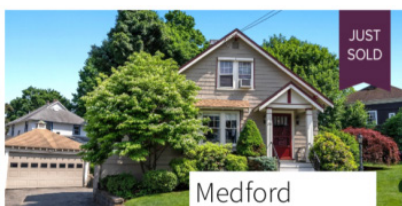
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MARKET ACTIVITY

WE HAVE BEEN BUSY...



We have been busy, but never too busy for you! These four properties were sold in one month! If you see something you would like to know more about, have any questions or are thinking about buying or selling a property, please don't hesitate to send us an email or give us call!

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Patricia Ng Broker Associate
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Please make all checks payable to: **MHS Varsity Softball**

Please send both forms and payment to:
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 Medford, MA 02155

If you have any questions email us at MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com
 MHS Varsity Softball is a non-profit organization in affiliation with Medford High School, our tax ID is listed below for your records.
 Tax ID 04-6001400

Artwork / Logos must be submitted to MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com
 Deadline for artwork / logos is March 7th for full season exposure, any late submission banners will be hung starting tournament weekend.



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SOMERVILLE/MEDFORD REMEMBERING THIS WEEK'S QUOTABLE QUOTES ON BEACON HILL



Obituary

Daly, Genevieve L. "Gene" (Bennett) Of Somerville, passed away on Wednesday, December 20th after a brief illness. She was 90.

Born and raised in Starks, Louisiana. She was the daughter of the late Emmett L. and Isabel (May) Bennett. Gene was a strong-willed person and she always lived life to the fullest. She was known, to cause a ruckus when she did not agree with what was happening. On her down time, she loved to watch classic movies, listen to her favorite Motown hits or just simply read a book in her favorite chair overlooking the window to the street. When her husband John

retired, they both took to Retirement easily and became world travelers. Gene traveled all 7 continents and all 50 states! Their love for traveling allowed them to make many new friends around the world. There was no one like Gene and her legacy will live on through her family. She was the beloved wife of the late John T. Daly who passed away in 2017. The devoted mother of Sharon Wollman and her husband Bruce of Somerville and

the late John T. "Jack" Daly of Plymouth. The loving grandmother of Michael Daly and his wife Alexandra of Whitman, and Alessandra Re and her husband Joseph of Rockland. The cherished great-grandmother of Jameson, Brooks, Sloane and Blaire. Also survived by many loving nieces and nephews. A prayer service will be conducted in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home 855 Broadway (Powder House

Sq.) on Thursday, December 28th at 11:00AM. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend. Calling Hours will be held on Wednesday, December 27th from 4:00PM to 7:00PM. Services will conclude with Gene being laid to rest with her beloved husband John.

SOMERVILLE/MEDFORD REMEMBERING TOI VAN NGO



Obituary

Mr. Toi Van Ngo passed away at his Medford home; surrounded by his devoted family on December 21, 2023, he was 96. Born and raised in Bac Ninh, Vietnam he was the son of the late Loi Van Ngo and Dau Thi Nguyen.

The beloved husband of the late Hien Kim Do, he was the father of nine children and grandfather of many loving grandchildren and great grandchildren. Visiting Hours will be

held in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home, 855 Broadway (Powder House Sq.) Somerville on Friday, December 29th from 4:00PM to 8:00PM. A Funeral Mass will be celebrated in Saint Clement Church - Blessed An-

drew Phu Yen Parish, on Saturday, December 30th at 10:00AM. Relatives and friends invited to attend. Services will conclude with burial at Holy Cross Cemetery, Malden.

CITY OF SOMERVILLE ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT INCREASING SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD PAY AND BENEFITS

Continued from front page



Mayor Katjana Ballantyne recently announced that the City of Somerville and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) have successfully reached an agreement to provide better wages and benefits for Somerville crossing guards. Highlights from the new contract terms include a 20 percent pay increase from \$20 to \$24/ an hour and paid sick leave benefits.

"Crossing guards play a vital role in helping our entire Somerville Public Schools community start and end each school day safely," said Mayor Ballantyne. "This new collective bargaining agreement with the SEIU not only recognizes the crucial role that crossing guards play in community safety, but also demonstrates our commitment to fair compensation and improved working conditions for

our public servants." Read more about the announcement here. If you are interested in learning more about joining the City of Somerville as a crossing guard, or other employment opportunities, please visit somervillema.gov/careers.

LAER REALTY PARTNERS JANET L GHIOZZI AT (978) 984-2038

Janet Ghiozzi
Realtor



Cell: (978)984-2038
JGhiozzi@laerrealty.com
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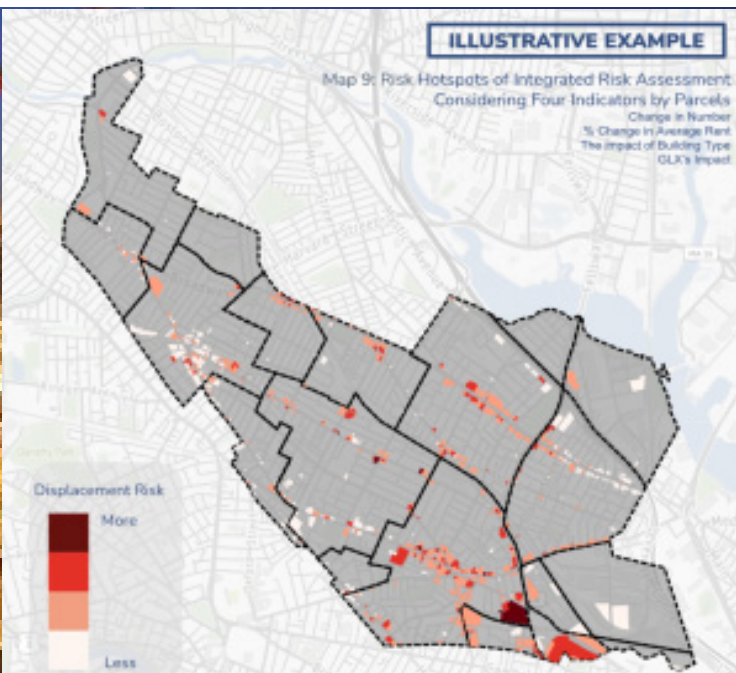
Buyers looking for their first, or next, home and sellers looking for the best outcome from their home sale can contact Janet L Ghiozzi at: (978) 984-2038.





SOMERVILLE RELEASES STRATEGIC STUDY TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES AVOID COMMERCIAL DISPLACEMENT

Continued from front page



areas where commercial displacement may occur. Programs to help businesses and nonprofits mitigate or avoid displacement based on national best practices. Zoning and permitting policies to prevent displacement from large-scale commercial developments.

This work builds on the ongoing efforts of the City's Economic Development Division to support small local businesses. In addition to allocating a total of \$3.5 million to local businesses to assist with pandemic impacts, other initiatives include:
Establishment of a new Small Business Liaison Diversity catalog
Development of a Commercial Tenant Guidebook
Small business technical support
Business resource newsletter



Study's Findings Will Inform City's Work to Help Small Businesses Navigate Potential Gentrification

SOMERVILLE – Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the City of Somerville's Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development (OSPCD) are announcing the release of Mitigating Commercial Displacement in Somerville, MA, a study commissioned by Somerville's Economic Development team, and authored by graduate students from the Rappaport Greater Boston Advanced Applied Field Lab and the Bloomberg-Harvard Cities

Field Lab at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Upon taking office, a priority for the Ballantyne administration was creating a comprehensive commercial displacement prevention program as part of an innovative, three-pronged approach to mitigate residential, commercial, and artist displacement in Somerville. The findings of Mitigating Commercial Displacement in Somerville, MA will help inform the City's long-term planning to continue to help independent local businesses remain in Somerville.

"Our small businesses are the heartbeat of our neighborhoods and a driving force of our local economy. But they are facing multiple pressures including rising rents, so we are focused on finding the best solutions to help them stay and thrive here. This study offers useful insights to drive that work," said Mayor Ballantyne. "I want to thank the student researchers for their thoughtful and collaborative work that will anchor our initiatives to keep small businesses here in Somerville."

Over the course of the study, the researchers

spoke to Somerville business operators, developers, and other stakeholders to gain a comprehensive understanding of the obstacles facing small business owners in Somerville. These interviews were analyzed in parallel with previous case study research, current zoning laws, geospatial analysis, and financial modeling to propose new strategies to assist small businesses as they work to remain in Somerville.

These proposals include: Methods for using GIS (geographic information systems) and property data to predict potential

CITY OF SOMERVILLE ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT INCREASING SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD PAY AND BENEFITS

SOMERVILLE – Mayor Katjana Ballantyne is announcing that the City of Somerville, and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), have successfully reached a collective bargaining agreement that will provide better wages and benefits for these essen-

tial public safety employees. "Crossing guards play a vital role in helping our entire SPS community start and end each school day safely," said Mayor Ballantyne. "This new collective bargaining agreement with the SEIU not only recognizes the crucial role that crossing guards play in community safety, but also demonstrates our commitment to fair

compensation and improved working conditions for our public servants."

Under the terms of the new contract, crossing guards will receive a 20 percent pay increase from \$20/an hour to \$24/an hour effective immediately, with a commitment to 2.5% annual raises in subsequent fiscal years. Current guards will also receive retroactive pay

dating back to July of 2023, the official start date of the contract.

The salary increase brings Somerville's pay rate for these positions in line with neighboring communities, and will help attract and retain dedicated candidates for these vital public service roles.

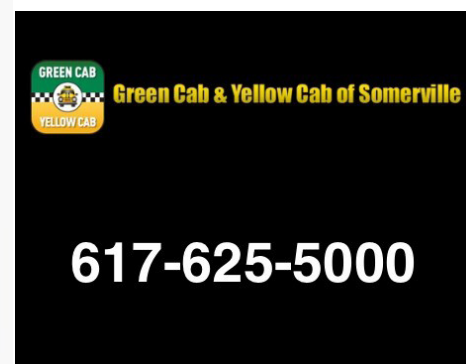
In a first for these part-time

positions, in addition to salary increases, Somerville crossing guards will also now be provided with paid sick leave benefits. The new contract also includes stipends for improved outgear gear including an annual footwear stipend and a full-length high visibility raincoat to help ensure the comfort and safety of the guards in all conditions.

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Are you a veteran who is looking for a way to connect with other veterans, stay active, and give back to your community? If so, then the American Legion Post 69 in Malden is the place for you! We need your help to fulfill our commitments and are encouraging Veterans to Join. We are committed to serving veterans and their families. We can help you open doors to benefits, Health care assistance, employment, and other veteran programs. We

also support youth programs in scouting, ROTC, and help young people learn the importance of education and service to their country. If you are not a Veteran and has family member that was or is a Veteran, we have a program for you – The Sons of the American Legion. The Sons hold their own events, but also support Post activities. If you are interested in joining the American Legion Post 69, please contact us at

(781) 324-9570 or email us at americanlegion@gmail.com. We would be happy to welcome you into our tami. By the way, Post 69 host's a karaoke party every first and third Friday of the month. This is a great opportunity for veterans and the public to come together and have some fun. The party starts 7:00 PM and ends 11:00 PM. There is no cover charge. Food and drinks will be available for purchase We hope to see you there!



VOLUNTEER TODAY FOR THE SOMERVILLE PEDESTRIAN & TRANSIT ADVISORY AND SOMERVILLE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEES



Applications Due February 9, 2024
SOMERVILLE – The City of Somerville is seeking volunteers to join both the Somerville Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC) and the Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee (SBAC). PTAC and SBAC advise the City on projects, policy, and programs

related to walking, bicycling, and transit as a means of transportation in Somerville and work to create a safer and more equitable built environment for people of all ages and abilities. Committee work includes reviewing City project/plans and providing recommendations, working with City staff to engage

residents for input and information about city projects, and working with other transportation organizations at the local, state, and national level. PTAC typically meets in a hybrid fashion on the third Thursday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. SBAC typically meets in a hybrid fashion on the first Thursday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Members are appointed by the Mayor to serve two-year terms in a volunteer capacity. Members must either live or work in Somerville and take an active interest in bicycle, pedestrian, or transit issues in Somerville.

Members are expected to attend monthly committee meetings and one sub-committee meeting, for an average time commitment of 3-4 hours a month. All members must agree to follow the City of Somerville's Code of Conduct for Board, Commission, and Committee Members. Interested community members should submit a brief statement of interest and information on any relevant qualifications on this form by noon on Friday, February 9th, 2024. Statements of interest should indicate whether the candidate is applying for the PTAC, SBAC, or either committee.



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If there is anything in particular you would like to see from us or if you need help preparing food at home for your families please reach out and we will do

our best to help. Whether it be recipe ideas with random things you might have purchased or if you run out of something that you need that we can help with please don’t hesitate to ask.
A Tavola Restaurant Winchester outdoor patio dining is open for business & takeout orders: (781)729-1040 34 Church St Winchester
Thank you for your continued support.



THIS WEEK'S QUOTABLE QUOTES ON BEACON HILL

Quotable Quotes



By Bob Katzen

"Mass Department of Transportation is excited to be taking this step toward a brighter future for our environment and for ourselves with the

installation of a state-wide network of reliable fast-charging stations for electric vehicles. Fast-charging stations at convenient locations along major roads will absolutely lead to reduced air pollution, fewer gas-guzzling cars on our roads, and a willingness by people to make smarter choices which will help combat climate change."

—Transportation Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt reaching out to vendors to establish a network of reliable fast charging stations for electric vehicles on state roadways.

"Our administration is approaching early literacy with urgency. We're committed to investing in programs that support our

younger students and ensure they are using materials and strategies backed by evidence."

— Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll announcing that the Healey administration is awarding \$850,000 to organizations to increase access to evidence-based and culturally responsive literacy support for Massachusetts preschoolers.

"The RMV and its employees have worked hard to meet the challenge of increased demand for appointments and credentials under the Work and Family Mobility Act. The amount of new learner's permits represents an increase of 244 percent, and new driver's licenses represents an increase of 120 percent, when compared to the same time period in

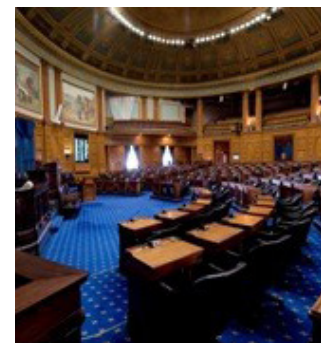
2022. In addition, 33,648 out of state conversions were processed.

— Registrar of Motor Vehicles Colleen Ogilvie reporting on the new law that was effective in July, which allows undocumented/illegal immigrants to apply for a Massachusetts standard driver's license.

"For years, Google has harmed consumers and app developers alike by restricting consumer's choices for app stores, downloads and payment methods on Android devices. Our settlement helps impacted consumers and requires Google to reform its anticompetitive business practices. My office will continue to protect consumers and ensure that businesses

can fairly compete in the digital economy."

—Attorney General Andrea Campbell, as part of a group of 52 other attorneys general, announcing a \$700 million agreement with Google in their lawsuit over Google's anti-competitive conduct with the Google Play Store. In addition to restitution to consumers, Massachusetts will receive more than \$1.4 million in penalties as part of the settlement agreement.



THE TRAFFIC COMMISSION, BY THE POWER VESTED IN IT THROUGH A SPECIAL ACT OF THE LEGISLATURE, CHAPTER 397 OF THE ACTS OF 1978, HEREBY AMENDS THE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS WITH THE ADDITION OF THE FOLLOWING:

2023-130 Article V Section 5-15 "Handicapped Parking" is amended with the addition of the following location: 84 Ten Hills Rd (to be located at 86 Ten Hills Rd).

2023-131 Article V Section 5-10 "Safety Zones" is amended as follows: Rescind the two Fire Lanes on Palmer Ave – on the north side, the entire length from Franklin St. to the dead end (93 ft.)

and on the south side, from Franklin St. extending 20 ft. westerly.

2023-132 Article V Section 5-10 "Safety Zones" is amended as follows: Fire Lane on Arlington St., from the corner of Hawthorn St. down the odd-side in a westerly direction for a distance of 20 ft.

2023-133 Article V Section 5-5 "Parking Locations and Prohibitions" is amended as follows: the west side of Beacon St.

from approximately 60 ft. south of Roseland St. to 100 ft. south of Roseland St., regulated as Valet Parking Only at all times.

2023-134 Article V Section 5-2 "Loading/Service Zones" is amended as follows: on the west side of Beacon St. from approximately 20 ft. south of Roseland St. to approximately 60 ft. south of Roseland St., regulated as loading zone from 9am-7pm and permit parking at all other times.

2023-135 Article V Section 5-5 "Parking Locations and Prohibitions" is amended as follows: on the west side of Edmands St., from approximately 110 ft. north of Bonair St. to approximately 360 ft. north of Bonair St., regulated as No Parking Any Time.

PROMULGATED: DECEMBER 14, 2023

ADVERTISED: DECEMBER 26, 2023

JANUARY 2, 2024

JANUARY 9, 2024

EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 17, 2023

Somerville/ Medford News Weekly 12/26/23, 01/02/24, 02/09/24

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate (617) 666-2121

Congratulations NG/PRAYSMAN TEAM. Includes logos for President's Circle, Top 5% of the Network, and Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Commonwealth Real Estate.

Grid of 9 real estate listings with 'SOLD' banners. Locations include Somerville, Davis Square, West Somerville, Cambridge, Medford, Malden, Frammingham, and Waltham.



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The Somerville/Medford News Weekly

Here's your weekly News Talk Shout Out dosage continued from page 2



Heres Your Weekly Dosage of Somerville News Weeklys Newstalk Shoutout/Speakup Loud

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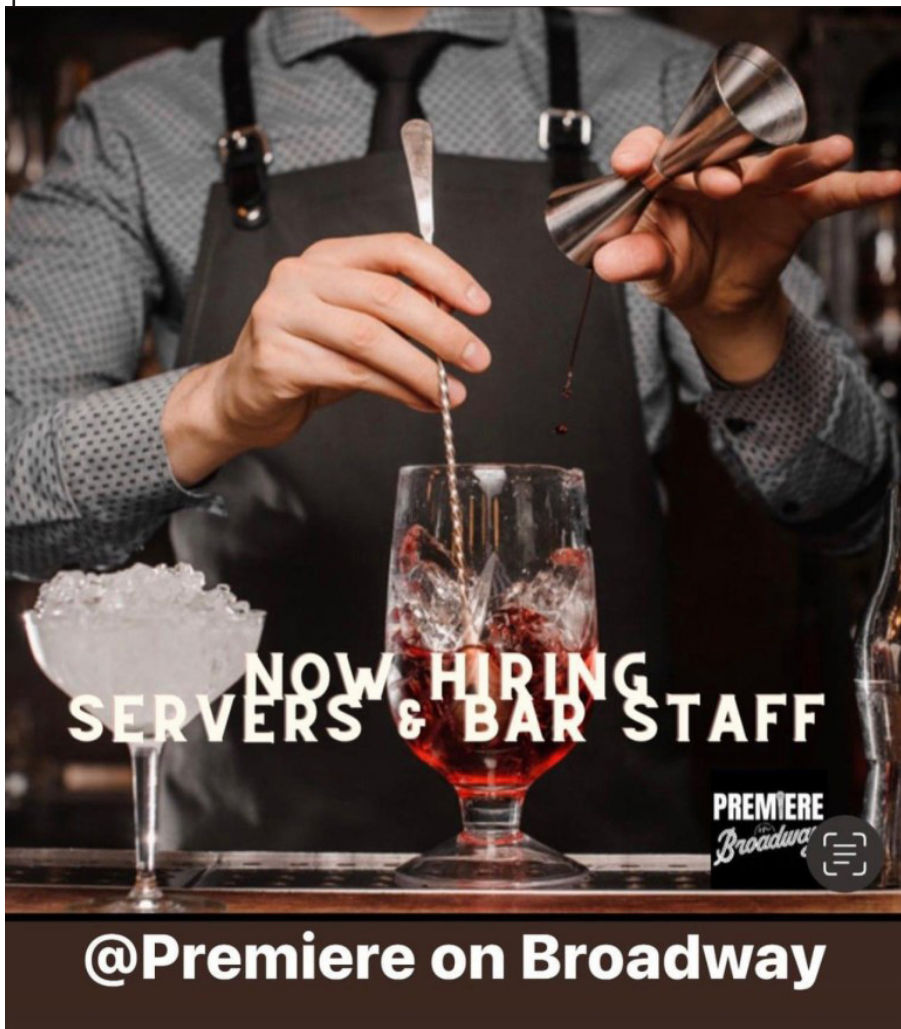
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BAN DISCRIMINATION BASED ON HEIGHT AND WEIGHT (H 1705)

By Bob Katzen

A bill that would prohibit discrimination on the basis of a person's height or weight, unless for the purpose of compliance

with any established state, federal or industry safety standard, was heard by the Judiciary Committee.

"This bill takes an important step towards rectify-

ing biases about a person's height and weight factors often beyond their control," said sponsor Rep. Tram Nguyen (D-Andover). "Body size discrimination affects all aspects of

an individual's life, from the workplace, to health-care, to their education. By safeguarding individuals from discrimination based on their looks we not only promote equal

opportunities but also foster a healthier and more equitable community."

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. The first step to becoming a police officer is to take the Massachusetts Civil Service Police Entrance exam.

You can apply for the exam at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/2024-municipal-police-officer-mbta-transit-police-officer-and-state-trooper-examination>

until January 16th.

If you missed our first information session, we will be holding another one on January 10th at the Medford Police Department from 6:00-8:30pm.

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- Must be able to qualify for and complete all City standards

SOMERVILLE AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT TRANSITION PLAN TASK FORCE SEEKS MEMBERS



SOMERVILLE – The City of Somerville's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan Task Force, which will review and update the City's ADA Transition Plan, is accepting applications from community members to join the Task Force.

The ADA Transition Plan Task Force will be part of a community driven process to review the ADA Transition Plan and ensure that the City complies with all disability laws and promotes an environment free of discrimination and harass-

ment for individuals with disabilities in Somerville. Task Force members will review the current ADA transition plan, propose updates to the plan, and draft and propose accountability measures to monitor and sustain continual progress.

The Task Force will consist of 6 constituent members supported by City staff and representatives from the City's Commission for Persons with Disabilities. All applicants must live or work in Somerville. Ideal candidates will be committed to disability and accessibility advocacy and invested in expanding accessibility services City-wide. Applicants must be at least 17 years old.

Duration and Time Commitment
ADA Transition Plan Task Force members will be compensated for their

time. Members will be expected to attend meetings, which will be hosted both virtually and in-person with a hybrid option, up to two hours per week over a period of no longer than 8 months. Members should also be prepared to attend potential additional meetings for subcommittees and readings. If virtual meetings create a barrier for you, please still apply, and our team will work to aid you with access and/or training.

How to Apply: Deadline January 19, 2024

The ADA Transition Plan Task Force application will be available online starting Monday, December 18 on the City website at somervillema.gov, the RSJ website at somervillema.gov/RSJ, and will be shared via City and RSJ social media feeds. Community members can also pick up printed applications at the Somerville

City Hall front desk or by calling the ADA Coordinator, Adrienne Pomeroy, at 617-625-6600 x2059.

Applications are due by 7 p.m. on Friday, January 19, 2024. Applicants can fill out the online form, email their responses to apomeroy@somervillema.gov, or hand-deliver or mail them to Somerville City Hall, Attn: RSJ Department, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA 02143.

###

The City of Somerville is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, disability or any other protected category. Women, minorities, veterans, and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply. Auxiliary aids and ser-

vices, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities free of charge, upon request.

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



BACKGROUND CHECKS ON VOLUNTEERS (H 1622)

By Bob Katzen

Another bill before the Judiciary Committee would give local law enforcement agencies the authority to obtain criminal offender record information (CORI), including sealed records, for people who volunteer at an organization primarily engaged in providing activities or programs to children 18 years of age or younger.

“Massachusetts General Law requires all organizations serving children under age 18 to obtain criminal offender record information before accepting any person as a volunteer,” said sponsor Rep. David Linsky (D-Natick). “However, many youth athletic leagues operate on limited budgets and struggle to meet the expenses associated with

individually CORI checking every prospective volunteer. This legislation would allow local police departments to help ease the financial burden many organizations face when conducting these costly background checks. [This] is a common-sense bill that upholds the public interest of protecting children from dangerous criminals at no additional expense to taxpayers.”



THREE KINGS CELEBRATION, JANUARY 7

The SomerViva: Office of Immigrant Affairs, in collaboration with Saint Benedict Church, warmly invite you to a festive Three Kings Celebration. Mingle, enjoy refreshments, and explore a variety of community partner

and city department resource tables offering valuable information and services to support and empower our community. This event will take place on Sunday, January 7, at 17 Franklin St. from 2 to

4 p.m.



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Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Lacourt Realty, LLC & 300 Somerville Avenue Realty, LLC are pleased to announce **2 income-restricted rental apartments** available through the City of Somerville Inclusionary Housing Program at:

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6		\$86,120

Address + Unit Number	Bedrooms	Monthly Rent	Utilities Included	Approx. Area (SF)
300 Somerville Ave. #6	2	\$1,290	N/A	1,509
124 College Ave. #2-5	2	\$1,492	Water; Sewer	650

* Min. income requirements are waived for households with rental subsidies through mobile housing vouchers such as Section 8, MRVP, VASH etc.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE: Tues. Jun. 27– Wed. Jul. 26 22
Online at: somervillema.gov/inclusionaryhousing
Request hard applications and more information at: (617) 625-6600 X 2566 or inclusionary@somervillema.gov

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Wed. Jul. 26, 2023 at 2:00 PM
Faxed to: 617-591-3235; Emailed to: inclusionary@somervillema.gov
Mailed/Dropped off to: City Hall Annex: 50 Evergreen Ave., Somerville, MA 02145;

LOTTERY: Tues. Aug., 1, 2023 @ 3PM | Register to view the lottery here:
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Somerville/Medford News Weekly 06/27/23, 07/04/23, 07/11/23, 07/18/23

Individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, in order to access the programs and activities of the City of Somerville or to attend meetings, should contact the ADA Coordinator, Adrienne Pomeroy, at 617-625-6600 x2259 or apomeroy@somervillema.gov.

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SOMERVILLE NAMED ONE OF NATION'S DIGITAL INCLUSION TRAILBLAZERS

This year the City of Somerville was named a 2023 Digital Inclusion Trailblazer by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA), joining 46 municipal, county, and regional governments recognized for paving the way for digitally inclusive communities across the US.

Somerville achieved Trailblazer status from the ongoing work of the Digital Bridge Initiative, which includes:

Funding digital navigators at the Council on Aging and SomerPromise (one at each). Digital literacy skills and digital navigator funded by

the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) to MassHire MetroNorth to serve Somerville residents at Somerville Community Corporation (SCC). Currently working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to create a Digital Equity Plan for the City of Somerville.



JOIN THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) TRANSITION PLAN TASK FORCE



The City of Somerville's Department of Racial and Social Justice (RSJ) is seeking six community members to join the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan Task Force.

The Task Force will be part of a community driven process to review the current plan to ensure that the City complies with all disability laws and promotes an environment

free of discrimination and harassment for individuals with disabilities. The Task Force will then propose updates to the plan and create accountability measures to monitor and sustain continual progress.

Applications are due by 7 p.m. on Friday, January 19. Apply now or see the announcement on the City website to learn more.

YOU'RE INVITED TO THE 2024 CITY OF SOMERVILLE INAUGURATION CEREMONIES



The Somerville community is invited to attend the 2024 Inauguration celebration on Tuesday, January 2. At the Inauguration your elected officials get sworn in for their two-year terms in office, followed by addresses from the Mayor, President

of the City Council, and Chair of the School Committee.

Organizational meetings of the City Council and School Committee will precede the ceremony at 5 p.m. in the City Council Chambers in City Hall

(93 Highland Ave). The Inauguration begins at 6 p.m. in the Somerville High School Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.) and is immediately followed by a reception and party at The Row Hotel at Assembly Row (360 Foley St.) at 7:30 p.m.

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IMPOUND VEHICLE OF DRUNK DRIVERS (H 1583)

By Bob Katzen

The Judiciary Committee held a hearing on a bill that would require that a driver's car be impounded for not less than 12 hours following their arrest for operating under the influence, regardless of whether the arrestee has consented to a blood alcohol test.

It would also require police officers to provide the designated person picking up the arrestee from the police station with a written explanation of the

potential criminal and civil penalties they could face if they permit the arrestee to drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

"Drunk driving remains a serious public safety problem in Massachusetts and across the country," said sponsor House Minority Leader Brad Jones (R-North Reading). "[The bill] provides additional tools to help law enforcement officials make our streets safer by keeping alcohol-impaired drivers off the road."

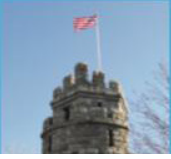


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SOMERVILLE NAMED ONE OF NATION'S DIGITAL INCLUSION TRAILBLAZERS

Continued from front page



City's Digital Bridge Initiative Recognized for Work to Close Digital Divide by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance

SOMERVILLE – The National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) has named the City of Somerville as a 2023 Digital Inclusion Trailblazer, recognizing the city's efforts to close the digital divide. The NDIA is focused on advancing digital equity by supporting community

programs and equipping policymakers to act.

As the pandemic demonstrated, digital inclusion – access to affordable high-speed internet, devices, and digital skills training – is essential to participating and thriving in today's world. Recognizing the ongoing needs of the community, Somerville didn't stop digital inclusion efforts at the end of the quarantine.

"Closing the digital divide in Somerville is not just a goal; it is a moral imperative," said Mayor Ballantyne. "Somerville's Digital Bridge team is doing innovative work that helps empower our community, creates more equal opportunities, and

fosters a future where every resident can thrive in the digital landscape, and I'm so pleased to see their efforts recognized by the NDIA."

This year, Somerville joins a record number of Digital Inclusion Trailblazers, with 47 total awardees representing municipal, county, and regional governments paving the way for digitally inclusive communities across the US.

"Nonprofits, libraries, churches, and other community organizations can't reach digital equity on their own. For everyone to thrive in today's digital world, we need all hands on deck," said Angela Siefer, NDIA executive

director. "NDIA's Digital Inclusion Trailblazers exemplify the key role local governments have in building connected communities for all of their residents."

Trailblazers provide models for other local governments to aspire to as communities build digital inclusion ecosystems. Somerville achieved Trailblazer status by prioritizing digital inclusion for residents of their communities through: Funding digital navigators at the Council on Aging and SomerPromise (one at each). Digital literacy skills and digital navigator funded by MBI to MassHire MetroNorth to serve Somerville residents at SCC.

Currently working with MAPC to create a Digital Equity Plan for the City of Somerville.

NDIA revised the seven-year-old Trailblazer program this year, identifying seven categories of current best practices. Each applicant's materials are verified for accuracy, assessed for community impact, and posted in an interactive map and searchable database on NDIA's website. By sharing materials with open-sourcing, NDIA provides community advocates and local governments ways to continue learning, connect with trailblazing peers, and plan their own digital inclusion solutions.

Join The Somerville Blessing Boxes Group



Somerville Blessing Boxes are located at Union Square Plaza and Statue Park Davis Square
Give what you can, Take what you need
Check us out Somerville Blessing Boxes on Facebook and please join the group!
The outpour of support of donations that have been coming in of much needed supplies of foods, hygienic items and warm clothing from the generous people of Somerville is overwhelming.
Its up to all of us to help when we can to make a difference in the lives of others especially in those of the

homeless and less fortunate.
A "Somerville Blessing Boxes" Facebook page has been established keep everyone updated on donations and the Blessing Boxes inventory status. Please feel free to join the page and follow all the good that is being done everyday by the good people of Somerville.
One blessing box is located at Statue Park in Davis Square and the other is located at Union Square, Plaza in Union Square.
"Give what you can, Take what you need."
Much thanks and appreciation,
Frank Santangelo

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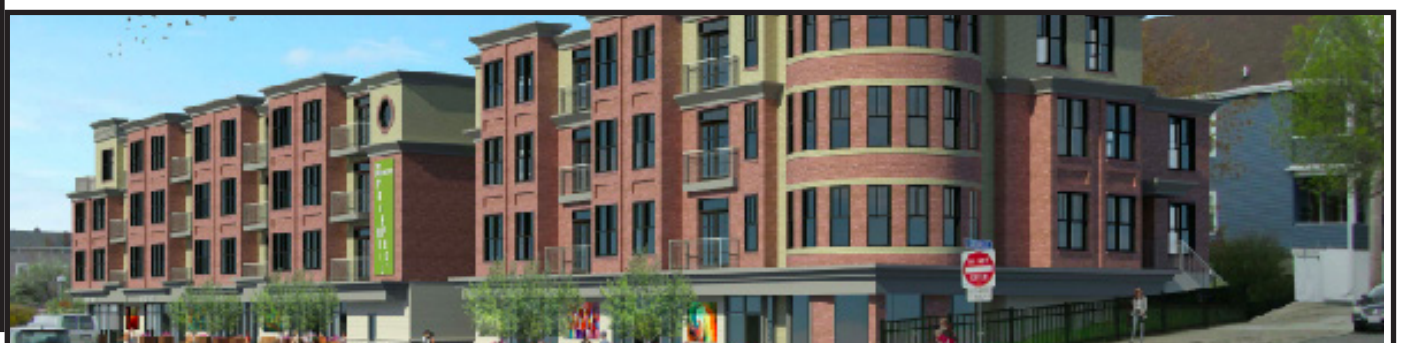
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GIVE WORKERS PAID TIME OFF TO VOTE (H 4217)

By Bob Katzen

The House approved and sent to the Senate legislation that would require employers to give employees sufficient time off, with pay, to vote in state, city and town elections, on Election Day, if the employee does not have sufficient time to vote outside working hours.

Employees would be required to give an employer three days' notice of his or her intent to take time off to vote on Election Day. The measure also bars employers from requiring an employee to vote by mail or to vote during a designated early voting period prior to Election Day.

The proposal would replace a current law that is narrower,

applies only to manufacturing, mechanical or mercantile establishments, only allows the worker to vote during the two hours after the polls open on Election Day and does not require the employers to pay the worker for the time off.

"The legislation that was advanced by the House today will help to guarantee that every Massachusetts voter has

time to vote on Election Day, regardless of the constraints of their job, a critical step towards ensuring that every eligible voter has the chance to make their voice heard at the ballot box," said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy).

Authors of the bill and other earlier versions of it did not respond to requests

by Beacon Hill Roll Call asking them to comment on this new version of the measure. Legislation. Legislators who did not respond are Sen. Brendan Crighton (D-Lynn) and Reps. John Lawn (D-Watertown) and Aaron Michlewitz (D-Bos-

JUNK FEES

By Bob Katzen

A public hearing was held on Attorney General Andrea Campbell's office's recently proposed regulations cracking down on hidden junk fees. The proposed rules would require upfront total pricing

of any items and services, disclosure about the nature and purpose of fees and taxes and make it easier for consumers to cancel trial offers and renewal fees.

"Comparable, complete and timely price information allows consum-

ers to make the right personal choices for their pocketbooks while also leading to a more competitive marketplace," said MASSPIRG's Legislative Director, Deirdre Cummings. "For too long, we have watched as businesses have gradually stopped disclosing true

prices in a practical or meaningful way. We have all experienced purchasing tickets, services, hotel rooms, subscriptions advertised at one price only to find the actual or final price is significantly more by the time we have to pay. This not only hurts our wallets but also

harms businesses that truly are transparent and are disclosing total costs upfront, even though their prices look higher compared to the deceptive incomplete lower prices."

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TOP 10 PERCENT OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES

By Bob Katzen

UMass announced that the top 10 percent of the state's future community college graduates will receive a minimum

of \$5,000 per year if they enroll at one of the four college campuses in Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth and Lowell.

"We want to send a clear

message that UMass welcomes highly talented community college graduates to continue their pursuit of a college degree on our nationally ranked Amherst, Boston, Dart-

mouth and Lowell campuses," UMass President Marty Meehan said. "We believe this initiative will lead to more community college graduates choosing to finish their four-year

degree at UMass which will accelerate their upward economic trajectory and strengthen the commonwealth's workforce."

RETIRED POLICE DOGS – DAKOTA'S LAW – (H 2424)

By Bob Katzen

This bill would create a Retired Police Dog Care Fund to provide grants to non-profit organiza-

tions to provide care and medical services to retired police dogs. The law is named after Dakota, a police dog who suffered PTSD following the 2013

Boston Marathon bombing.

"Dakota's Law is based on a true life Massachusetts story which is now

an award winning documentary called 'Healing Dakota,'" said sponsor Rep. Steve Xiarhos (R-Barnstable). "Dakota's Law is aimed at provid-

ing a lifetime of financial support to pay the medical bills of heroic police K9s injured in the line of duty and upon their retirement."

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JOIN SOMERVILLE'S 248TH ANNUAL GRAND UNION FLAG RAISING



Program begins at 11:30 a.m. with Procession from City Hall to Prospect Hill

SOMERVILLE – Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the Somerville Museum will kick off the New Year on Monday, January 1, 2024, with a ceremony for the anniversary of the “Grand Union” flag-raising ceremony at Prospect Hill Park.

A processional will leave from the City Hall Concourse at 11:30 a.m., followed by a ceremony at Prospect Hill Park from 12 noon – 1 p.m. As always, members of the public, including families

with school children, are invited to participate, and to inspire authenticity, all are encouraged to wear what they consider to be traditional colonial clothing.

The annual ceremony commemorates the raising of the nation's first official flag, featuring thirteen red and white horizontal stripes, atop Prospect Hill on New Year's Day, 1776. At the time, Prospect Hill was a key site in a string of fortifications created by Washington and the

Continental Army in their siege of British troops in Boston during the first year of the American Revolution.

The afternoon's program will include songs to join in, and remarks by participants from the Charlestown and Rhode Island Militia, and the Ancient and Honorable Company (first chartered in 1638). His Majesty's 10th Regiment of Foot will bring a disturbing message from King George III, as a commemorative

flag is raised atop the Prospect Hill Tower.

Light refreshments will be offered, as well as a few items highlighting the City's historic assets for purchase from the Somerville Museum. Depending on the weather, the Tower will be open briefly to the public following the ceremony.

SOMERVILLE FIREFIGHTERS LOCAL 76 UPDATES

On Sunday the 17th, Local 76 was proud to host Santa Clause for the annual kids Christmas party. Per usual, the children of Local 76 had a blast and Santa left fat and happy!



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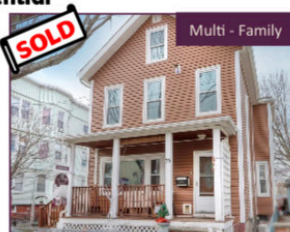
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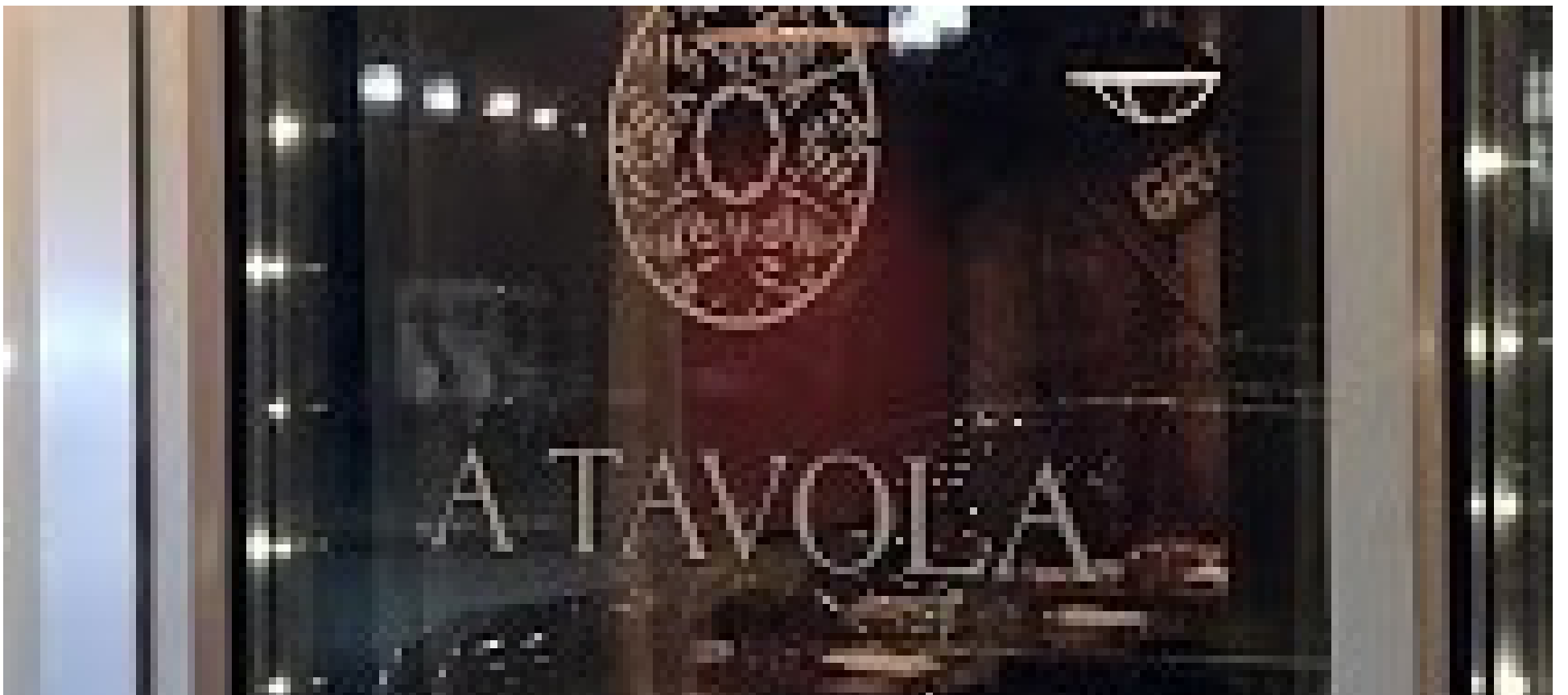
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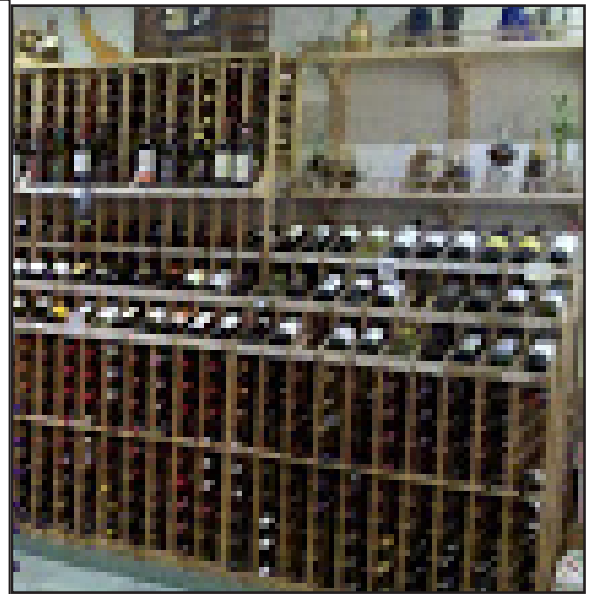


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