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VOL.1 NO.329-229

SOMERVILLE/MEDFORD MASS.

Tuesday September 10th, 2024

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School Violence and the Importance of Police Officers for Protection:



Startin off the year strong

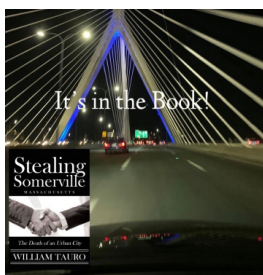
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NEWS TALK OUT
LOUD/SPEAK UP



Somerville Police
Real Life Somerville
Police Stories Page



MOUNT VERNON RESTAURANT

We are open for indoor dining along with take out. Our business hours are Sunday through Wednesday 11:30am to 8:30pm and Thursday through Saturday 11:30am to 9:30pm. Our full menu along with our daily specials and catering menu is available.
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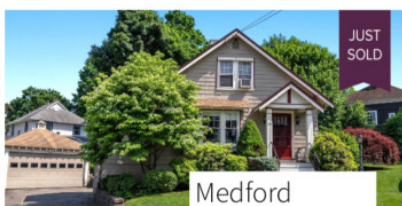
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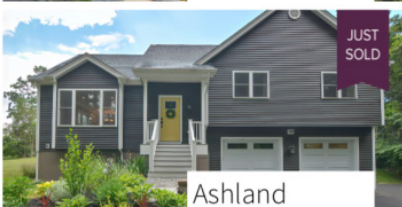
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We have been busy, but never too busy for you! These four properties were sold in one month! If you see something you would like to know more about, have any questions or are thinking about buying or selling a property, please don't hesitate to send us an email or give us call!

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Somerville/Medford Remembering Loretta M. (Gaff) Lynch



Loretta Lynch Obituary

Loretta M. (Gaff) Lynch, 86, died on Sunday, September 1, 2024 at her home surrounded by her loving family. She was the beloved wife of the

late Francis J. Lynch. She was raised and educated in Chelsea, MA and was a graduate of St. Rose High School in Chelsea. Loretta was employed for many years in the medical records department at Northeast Rehabilitation Hospital in Salem, NH until her retirement.

Loretta was a long-time parishioner of St. Anne Parish in Hampstead, NH. Although Loretta enjoyed participating in many activities like traveling to sunny places, visit-

ing casinos, shopping for bargains at her favorite stores, and bowling with her friends in the women's league "The Debutantes", of Salem New Hampshire, her main love was spending time with her family. Her most happy moments were spent sitting on the beach at Angle Pond in Sandown, NH watching her grandchildren and great-grandchildren joyfully play around her. Loretta is survived by her children; Colleen Blasetti and her husband Victor of Atlanta, GA, Stephanie

Staff and her husband Michael of Ormand Beach, FL, Dan Lynch and his wife, Janet of S. Boston, Ellen Orio of Sandown, NH and her partner Jay Turcotte of Sandown NH, Scott Lynch and his wife Kathy of Newton, NH, Stacey Mulhall and her husband Dan of Danville, NH, her eighteen grandchildren, twenty great grandchildren, her siblings Tom Gaff and his wife Mary Jo of FL, Jerry Gaff and his partner Gail of Hampstead, NH. She also leaves behind many

nieces and nephews. She was sadly predeceased by her children Dana Lynch and Allison Lynch and her siblings Jack Gaff, Harold Gaff and Jackie Ryan. Friends and family are invited to attend calling hours on Sunday, September 8, 2024 from 1pm-4pm at the Brookside Chapel & Funeral Home 116 Main St., Plaistow. Her funeral will begin at the funeral home on Monday, September 9 at 9:30am, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Anne Parish Ham-

Somerville/Medford Remembering Carol A. Healey



Obituary

Healey, Carol A.- Of Woburn, passed away on Friday, August 30th following a brief illness. She was 70 years young.

Born in Boston she was the daughter of the late Warren and Eleanor (Dares) Healey

A beloved mother, grand-

mother, and friend. She held her grandchildren close to her heart, especially her grand daughter Cass. She was always proud of her academic achievements and her dedication to cheerleading. In her eyes, Cass was nothing short of heaven-sent and the most remarkable person.

Carol was also deeply fond of her grand fur baby, Stormy, whose visits brought her immense joy. Her daily conversations with friends and family were a testament to her warmth and generosity. She especially looked forward to the annual non-traditional Thanksgiving gatherings, a cherished

tradition that she loved dearly.

A lover of laughter and games, she enjoyed telling jokes with Cass, playing Scrabble, and engaging in their unique "cookies" discussions and car ride to no where with Cass. Her gratitude extended to everyone in Jacki's life, even those she had not met personally, reflecting her caring nature and her ability to make others feel valued.

Her unconditional love for her daughter Jacki and her grandchildren was evident in every aspect of her life. She was a nurturing, kind-hearted individual who always looked

out for others, leaving a legacy of compassion and affection.

She will be profoundly missed and forever loved. Her memory will be cherished by all who knew her, a reminder of a life lived with love and joy.

She is the beloved mother of Jacki Craig of Ansonia, Ct and the late Alicia Walker. Beloved grandmother of Cassandra Hicks of CT, Jake Walker of Billerica and Shawn Walker of Billerica. Cherished sister of George Healey and his wife Janice of Florida and the late Linda Healey. Dear aunt of Lynn Kjersgard of East Boston and Bobby Cun-

ningham of Methuen. Also survived by many loving great nieces and nephews.

A graveside service will be held on Wednesday, September 11th at Mount Feake Cemetery, 203 Prospect St. Waltham, MA 02453 at 12:00PM. Please meet directly at the main gate.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend.

Services will conclude with interment at Mount Feake Cemetery, Waltham.

Somerville/Medford Remembering Edward A. Cooper



Obituary

Mr. Edward A. Cooper, of Somerville, passed away suddenly at home on

August 30, 2024, he was 58. Born in Boston, Eddie was one of eight children born to the late Josephine (Ryerson) and Robert Collinson. A proud member of Teamsters Local 25, he worked for the Watertown branch of UPS.

Eddie was the devoted father of Edward Cooper, Jr and Christopher Cooper, both of Somerville and beloved fiancé to their

mother, the late Donna M. Fay, who he missed every day since her passing in June of 2022. Stepfather of Joseph Hardy of New Hampshire. Cherished grandfather of Bella Hardy. Dear brother of Henry, Joan, Jeanie, Tony, Russell and the late James and Charles Cooper. Eddie is further survived by his mother-in-law, Patricia (Vando) Nutt of Somerville, sister-in-

law, Marianne Gullotto and her husband John of Arlington, brothers-in-law, Joseph Fay and his wife Cheryl of Tewksbury, James Nutt of Somerville, and Andrew Nutt and his wife Celia of Dracut and uncle to their families. He loved his dogs, Mushu and Bouncer who enjoyed their walks around Castle Island.

Calling Hours will be held

in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home, 855 Broadway (Powder House Sq.) Somerville on Friday, September 6th from 4:00PM to 7:00PM, with a Prayer Service beginning at 6:30PM. Relatives and friends invited to attend.

Interment will be held privately.

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Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line: Somerville's Rat Infestation is Getting Worse

Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line,

These are photos of my son's car from last night. The rats got underneath the hood and ate his wires and belt. One of the rats in the photo is alive.

One is dead, probably from indigestion, but this piece of work of an absentee mayor that we have is not doing a thing about it. People cannot even go in their own backyards in

fear of being overtaken by rats.

I know that if you were the mayor today the situation would've been solved just like you promised in your campaign speech when you ran for mayor. It's sad but people should've listened to you, but now they are suffering. Hopefully, you will run for mayor again.

Sincerely,
Another disgusted resident of Somerville



School Violence and the Importance of Police Officers for Protection:

Continued from front page



Dear Somerville School Parents and News Stations,

I am writing to express my concern about the recent rise in school violence that has left many parents, students, and educators anxious about safety in our local schools. As an active community member, I believe it is crucial to open a dialogue about effective strategies to protect our children and ensure a safe learning environment.

The alarming increase in violent incidents has sparked discussions about the role of law enforcement in schools. I strongly support having police officers stationed on school grounds as part of a broader safety strategy.

These officers serve not only as a deterrent to violence but also as trained responders who can immediately address dangerous situations. In a time when swift action is essential, their presence could be the difference between life and death.

Police officers are often seen as a visible authority figure, which can prevent incidents from escalating. Beyond this, they build relationships with students, creating a sense of trust and safety. Many officers involved in school safety programs take an active role in mentoring students, helping

them make better choices and providing a positive influence in their lives.

While I understand concerns about the militarization of school campuses, I believe that the benefits of having a professional and trained law enforcement presence outweigh the risks. It is important to ensure that these officers are equipped with appropriate training, including de-escalation techniques and mental health awareness, so they can interact effectively with students in distress.

So many all the time! Don't forget the library closes at 2pm-4pm for lack of security.

I urge you to highlight this important conversation in your coverage of school violence. Our children deserve a safe environment in which to learn and thrive, and law enforcement plays a critical role in making that possible.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
William Tauro

Somerville to Host 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony

Community invited to gather in honor of those lost and those who served

SOMERVILLE—To mark the 23d anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the City of Somerville Department of Veterans' Services invite the community to a 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony on Wednesday, September 11, at 6 p.m. in Davis Square.

All are invited to gather for the ceremony at the 9/11 Memorial in Davis Square (on the island at the intersection of Highland Avenue and Elm Street).

The observance will honor all victims of 9/11 as well as first responders, workers, and volunteers who rushed to the scene to save lives or to later help carry out the dangerous cleanup. It will include a moment of silence and feature an invocation and benediction by Father Paul Coughlin as well as remarks by Mayor Ballantyne and Veterans Director Jerome Thomas.

A bagpipe tribute including "Amazing Grace" will follow, and attendees will be given individual roses to place on the 9/11 Memorial. The ceremony will be framed by the presenta-

tion of and retiring of the colors (national, state, and unit flags) by the Honor Guards of the Somerville Police and Somerville Fire Department.

For more information, please email veterans@somervillema.gov or contact 311 at 617-666-3311.

Accessibility

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 to access the programs, activities, and meetings of the City of Somerville should please contact Adrienne Pomeroy in advance at 617-625-6600 x 2059 or apomeroy@somervillema.gov.

Interpretation and Translation via SOIA

Efforts to secure interpretation into any language will be made upon advance request (at least seven days in advance) by contacting the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs at somervillema.gov/ContactSomerViva or calling 311 at 617-666-3311.

GovTV Recording for Later Viewing

This event will be videotaped by the City's GovTV team. Watch it on-demand with optional closed-captioning (select the CC icon) on

YouTube.com/SomervilleCityTV. Or watch on cable TV at GovTV Comcast Ch. 22 and GovTV Astound (RCN) Ch. 13 & 613. Videos generally post within one to two business days of recording.

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Somerville Kicks Off Community Engagement for “Elm-Beacon Connector” Street Safety Project with Sept 25 Virtual Community Meeting

City will offer many diverse opportunities to get involved in “quick-build” safety upgrades planned for portions of Elm Street, Somerville Avenue, Beacon Street and Mossland Street.

SOMERVILLE—As part of the City’s intensive efforts to improve traffic safety for all, planning for the City’s new Elm-Beacon Connector street safety improvement project is getting underway. All are invited to help inform the project, which extends across four city wards on Elm Street, Somerville Avenue, Beacon Street, and Mossland Street.

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 participate in a range of feedback opportunities launching this fall.

The community engagement and design process will begin with a virtual community meeting on Wednesday, September 25, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Visit somervillema.gov/elmbeacon to attend. At this meeting, City staff will introduce the project and provide residents with the opportunity to ask questions and share their experiences. Public feedback opportunities on both the initial planning and then the design of the project will continue over the coming year.

More information about this project and opportunities to get involved are included below.

Project Overview and Timeline

The Elm-Beacon Connector project is intended to improve safety through a range of treatments including crosswalk improvements, traffic calming, separated bicycle facilities, and bus service improvements.

The project area includes:

Elm Street from Russell Street to Somerville Avenue

Somerville Avenue from Elm Street to Acadia Park

Mossland Street from Elm Street to Somerville Avenue

Beacon Street from Somerville Avenue to Oxford Street

The City plans to engage community members and develop the new design from September 2024 through June 2025. Installation of the new safety and mobility features is anticipated to take place in fall 2025.

The Elm-Beacon Connector is a “quick-build project,” which means that all of the work can be done without digging or making major structural changes to the street (such as moving sidewalk curbs or changing the height of the road). Instead, the City will use materials that are quicker to install like vertical plastic posts and paint markings on the street. This approach allows us to deliver safety improvements faster and more affordably than full street reconstruction.

How to Get Involved

The City will offer a mix of in-person and virtual engagement opportunities throughout the design process, including:

Online and in-person surveys

Community meetings for the general public, Kennedy school community, and more

Street outreach with neighborhood pop-ups and tabling at community events

Direct outreach to local businesses

“Office hours” drop-in events

The first event is a virtual community meeting on Wednesday, September 25, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Attend the meeting, learn more about the project by visiting somervillema.gov/elmbeacon.

Policy Background

The City’s efforts to increase safety on our streets are guided by our goals to both keep community members physically safe as well as to achieve our climate action goal to shift more trips to sustainable modes of travel like public transit, walking, biking, and rolling. You can learn more about this work in the plans below.

Somerville’s

Vision

Zero Action Plan to eliminate traffic fatalities and reduce severe injuries within our transportation system

The Somerville Bicycle Network Plan which aims to create bike facilities for people of all ages and abilities to safely get around the City

The City’s Climate Forward Plan to reduce carbon emissions and increase active and sustainable transportation options.

Somerville’s recently passed Safe Streets Ordinance reaffirms the City’s commitment to accelerating work toward these goals through the implementation of forward-looking design and safety practices.

More About this Quick-Build Project

The City aims to make the following safety improvements as part of this project:

Protected Bike Lanes (Elm Street and Somerville Avenue)

The City of Somerville is working to implement quick-build protected bike lanes along Elm Street from Russell Street to Somerville Avenue and Somerville Avenue from Mossland Street to Elm Street, in accordance with the City’s Bicycle Network Plan. Mossland Street Neighborway

Mossland Street will become a neighborway. Neighborways are walk-, roll-, and-bike friendly streets that create a low-stress and high comfort experience on residential streets. Neighborways provide a two-way connection for people biking even if the street is one-way for vehicular traffic.

Crossing Safety Improvements

City staff will also work to improve safety for people using crosswalks by increasing visibility at intersections and exploring options for increased pavement markings and signage at critical crosswalks.

Bus Service Improvements

The City will be working to improve the experience of people who ride the bus in the area. We will be exploring bus-stop locations as well as changes to traffic light timing that could reduce bus delays.

Parking Impacts

These planned safety improvements will require reducing the number of on-street parking spaces. With this in mind, the City is committed to work with local residents and businesses to employ creative approaches parking management. This includes regulating curb use and developing strategies that make the best use of limited parking resources.

Questions and comments can be submitted at any point by emailing transportation@somervillema.gov and by calling 311 (617-666-3311).

MEDFORD VFW POST 1012 HAS A NEW COMMANDER

Congratulations to The Medford VFW on its new Installation of Commander Steve McLaughlin as he takes charge.

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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.

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Thank you for your continued support.



REPRESENTATIVES' 2024 ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE RECORDS THROUGH SEPTEMBER 6 2024

By Bob Katzen

The House has held 129 roll calls in 2024. Beacon Hill Roll Call tabulates the number of roll calls on which each representative was present and voting, and then calculates that number as a percentage of the total roll call votes held. That percentage is the number referred to as the roll call attendance record.

In the House, 67.3 percent (107 representatives out of 159) did not miss any roll calls and have 100 percent

roll call attendance records; while 32.7 percent (52 representatives out of 159) have missed one or more roll calls.

The worst roll call attendance record belongs to Rep. Alan Silvia (D-Fall River) who missed 69 roll calls for a roll call attendance record of only 46.5 percent.

Rounding out the representatives with the top five worst records were Reps. Brian Ashe (D-Longmeadow) and Dawne Shand (D-Newburyport)

who each missed 23 roll calls (82.1 percent roll call attendance record); Smitty Pignatelli (D-Lenox) who missed 18 roll calls (86.0 percent roll call attendance record); and John Rogers (D-Norwwood) who missed 13 roll calls (89.9 percent roll call attendance record.)

The next representatives with the worst records are Reps. John Barrett (D-North Adams) and Carol Doherty (D-Taunton) who each missed 11 roll calls (91.4 percent roll call attendance record); Ruth

Balsler (D-Newton), Dave Rogers (D-Cambridge) and Marc Lombardo (R-Billerica) who each missed ten roll calls (92.2 percent roll call attendance record); Marjorie Decker (D-Cambridge) who missed nine roll calls (93.0 percent roll call attendance record); and Patrick Kearney (D-Scituate), Tom Stanley (D-Waltham), Chynah Tyler (D-Roxbury) and Erika Uytterhoeven (D-Somerville) who each missed eight roll calls (93.7 percent roll call attendance record).

Beacon Hill Roll Call contacted all of these representatives to ask why they missed some roll calls. Only six of the 15 responded. The other nine were contacted three times by Beacon Hill Roll Call but did not respond. The list of nonrespondents consists of Reps. Ashe, Barrett, Balsler, Decker, Stanley, Tyler, Uytterhoeven, Kearney, and Dave Rogers.

TAX COLLECTOR CAN WAIVE UP TO 50 PERCENT OF LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES (H 2971)

Continued from front page

By Bob Katzen

The House have initial approval to a bill that allows local tax collectors in cities and towns to waive up to 50 percent of the total property tax liability, including interest, charges and fees, of any homeowner in any tax period.

“[This bill] is a cru-

cial piece of legislation, especially in the current economic climate, as it provides much needed relief for taxpayers, particularly seniors who are often on fixed incomes,” said sponsor Rep. Marcus Vaughn (R-Wrentham). “For many seniors, property taxes and other local taxes can be a significant burden, especially in

times of economic uncertainty. As costs of living continue to rise, and many seniors struggle with limited income from pensions or Social Security, the flexibility offered by [this bill] can make a critical difference. By allowing tax collectors to waive a portion of these costs, this bill provides seniors with greater financial breathing

room, potentially enabling them to remain in their homes and communities without the fear of falling into debt or facing tax-related penalties.”

Vaughn continued, “In the context of today’s economic challenges, such as inflation and rising healthcare expenses, [the bill] is a compassionate

measure that recognizes the need to support our seniors and other vulnerable citizens. It promotes financial stability and peace of mind, ensuring that seniors are not unduly penalized for tax burdens they may find increasingly difficult to manage.”

PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMTS (H 2832)

By Bob Katzen

The House gave initial approval to legislation that would allow cities and towns to establish a pro-

gram to reduce the property tax for volunteer, call or auxiliary firefighters and EMTs in exchange for their services. The reduction would be in addition

to any other exemption or abatement to which the person is entitled but the measure limits the total reduction of property taxes for any individual to

\$2,500.

“This bill was filed to show appreciation and value for the sacrifice of volunteer firefighters and EMTs

in many Massachusetts communities without full time fire departments,” said sponsor Rep. Steven Howitt (R-Seekonk).

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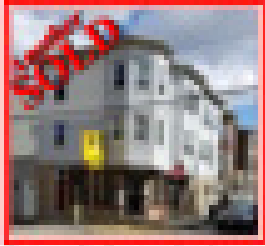


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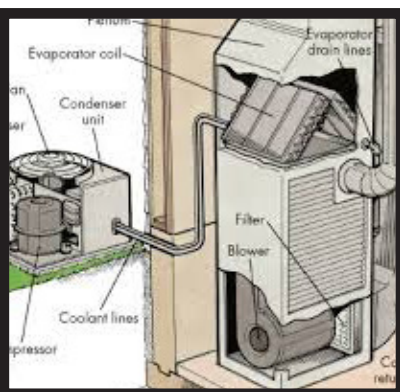
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The Somerville/Medford News Weekly

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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This Week's Quotable Quotes On Beacon Hill

By Bob Katzen

“Reducing the amount of waste we produce – by reusing, repairing, rescuing, and donating what we already have – has the biggest direct impact on our ability to meet our waste reduction goals. Funding these projects ensures we have the infrastructure to tackle waste reduction right here in Massachusetts.”

— Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bonnie Heiple announcing the the awarding pf \$140,126 in microgrants

to organizations, municipalities and academic institutions focused on reducing waste generation and prolonging the lifespan of products by offering donation, rescue, reuse and repair services across the state.

“Massachusetts is the number one state for women, for having a baby and for raising a family. That’s in large part due to our commitment to making the strongest child care and early education investments in the country. Our nation-leading efforts have added thousands of new child care slots across the

state, and we’re continuing to partner with the Legislature to make child care more affordable and support our hardworking providers.”

—Gov. Maura Healey on what she calls Massachusetts’ national leadership when it comes to making child care more affordable and accessible.

“This is yet another example of the extreme lack of government oversight of taxpayer dollars. Ordinary Massachusetts taxpayers are already struggling with inflation and the high cost of living in our state. It’s a slap in the face that the

Healey-Driscoll Administration shows such little respect for how Massachusetts residents’ hard-earned money is being spent.”

— MassGOP Chair Amy Carnevale commenting on a recent Boston Herald report revealing that EBT cards issued to Massachusetts welfare recipients have been used out of state, including in popular vacation destinations such as Hawaii, the Virgin Islands, Alaska and in 165 cities and towns in California, as well as 293 cities and towns in Florida, among many others across the nation.

“Massachusetts’ clean en-

ergy transition will deliver benefits to every community, including more high-paying jobs, cleaner air, improved public health and lower energy costs. We are proud to support municipalities as they make these investments, and we will continue to work with them to reduce our reliance on dirty fossil fuels.”

— Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper announcing more than \$7.4 million in grants for communities across Massachusetts to fund clean energy projects.



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LONG TERM CARE AND ASSISTED LIVING (H 5033)

By Bob Katzen

Gov. Healey signed into law a bill making changes to the state's long term care and assisted living industry that supporters said will make sweeping reforms to these two industries and will take a powerful step toward delivering high quality and safe care for older residents across the state.

"In Massachusetts, we are committed to making sure our aging residents and their loved ones can trust that they are receiving the highest quality of care from qualified staff at their long-term care or assisted living facilities," said Gov. Healey.

"This bill helps to provide them with that peace of mind, while also ensuring our hardworking providers have the resources and support they need to succeed in this important career. We are also proud to be enhancing protections for older LGBTQ+ residents to ensure they receive the specialized care they need free from discrimination."

The bill includes provisions related to basic health services administered in assisted living facilities and oversight of long-term care facilities, including creation of a program for the certification, training and oversight of certified medication aides who would be authorized

to administer medications to residents of long-term care facilities; several new initiatives to recruit and retain a dedicated long-term care workforce; allowing assisted living residences to offer basic health services such as helping a resident administer drops, manage their oxygen or take a home diagnostic test; giving the Executive Office of Elder Affairs new powers to penalize non-compliance by allowing it to fine assisted living residences up to \$500 per day; and authorizing the attorney general to file a civil action against a person who commits abuse, mistreatment or neglect of a patient or resident. Other provisions allow the

Department of Public Health (DPH) to limit, restrict or revoke a long-term care facility's license for cause, such as substantial or sustained failure to provide adequate care, substantial or sustained failure to comply with laws or regulations or lack of financial capacity to operate a facility; streamline the process for small house nursing homes to be licensed; direct DPH to establish and implement training and education programs on topics such as infection prevention and control, resident care plans and staff safety programs; and require long-term care facilities to develop individualized outbreak response plans to contain the

spread of disease and ensure consistent communication with DPH, residents, families, and staff. The measure also would require each long-term care facility to provide staff training on the rights and care of LGBTQ+ older adults and older adults living with HIV; forbid any long-term care facility and its staff from discriminating based in whole or in part on a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, intersex status or HIV status, whether through the denial of admission, medical or non-medical care, access to restrooms or through room assignments.

LONG TERM CARE AND ASSISTED LIVING (H 5033)

Bob Katzen

The House and Senate approved and sent to Gov. Healey a new version of a bill making changes to the state's long term care and assisted living industry that supporters said will make sweeping reforms to these two industries and will take a powerful step toward delivering high quality and safe care for older residents across the state. The bill includes provisions related to basic health services administered in assisted living facilities and oversight of long-term care facilities, including creation of a program for the certification, training and oversight of certified medication aides who would be authorized to administer medications to residents of long-term care facilities; several new initiatives

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based in whole or in part on a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, intersex status or HIV status, whether through the denial of admission, medical or non-medical care, access to restrooms or through room assignments. "This legislation couldn't have come at a more critical time when more oversight and accountability are needed in long-term care," said Rep. Tom Stanley (D-Waltham), House chair of the Committee on Elder Affairs. "[The bill] marks the first major legislative reform to our long term care and assisted living industries in over a quarter of a century. This legislation enhances both access to and quality of care in long-term care settings, tightens suitability standards for operators, strengthens supports for the

long-term care workforce and permanently allows assisted living residences to offer basic health services to their residents." "This landmark legislation is the culmination of years of advocacy and collaboration among so many people committed to improving life for our family, friends and neighbors residing or working in long-term care, assisted living and the community," said Sen. Pat Jehlen (D-Somerville), Senate chair of the Elder Affairs Committee. "There is always more work to do but we have agreed on policy that will surely have a positive impact on quality of care, transparency and oversight and planning for the future."

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RENAME THE MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION (S 2941)

By Bob Katzen

The House and Senate approved and sent to Gov. Healey legislation that would rename the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission to MassAbility, a change that supporters say will better define the agency's role in supporting residents with disabilities to live independently. The legislation also removes offensive terminology in the Massachusetts General Laws referring to people with

disabilities in sections of the law that pertain to MassAbility.

Supporters said the name change reflects the intention to empower individuals living with disabilities and move away from outdated terminology as the office undergoes broad changes toward a more expansive model for disability employment services and independent living.

"As lawmakers, we know that

words matter," said Speaker of the House Ron Mariano (D-Quincy). "This legislation is our latest effort to ensure that our state laws do not use antiquated words that carry negative connotations, words that also serve as a reminder of past injustices."

"This legislation is not just a name change but a mission enhancement," said Sen. Nick Collins, Senate Chair of the Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Over-

sight. "By defining the commonwealth's response now with emphasis on the abilities of our citizens, we are taking the MassAbility Commission in a new proactive, positive direction to better serve the community's needs."

"The language we use is important," said Rep. Antonio F. D. Cabral (D-New Bedford), House Chair of the Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

"Changing the agency's name to MassAbility represents a shift in the perception on disability, focusing instead on the strengths, skills and capabilities of every individual. This new name of the agency reduces stigma and emphasizes equal access, self-determination, and inclusion. I believe, as MassAbility, the agency will project the abilities rather than the barriers for jobseekers."

ADD 225 LIQUOR LICENSES (H 5039)

By Bob Katzen

The House and Senate approved and sent to Gov. Maura Healey a bill adding 225 new alcohol licenses for the City of Boston over the next three years.

Supporters said the licenses would be distrib-

uted across 13 Boston zip codes, expanding equity for restaurant owners in historically underrepresented parts of the city and boosting economic opportunity in communities of color that have been systemically excluded for decades.

"I'm proud to have worked with my colleagues in the

House and Senate to add additional liquor licenses to underserved neighborhoods across Boston," said Sen. Nick Collins (D-South Boston). "These additional licenses will improve the sustainability of existing small businesses, create opportunities for new businesses, and create economic vibrancy on our main streets."

"I am proud to support this equitable proposal that will give an economic boost to restaurants and small businesses across Boston, especially in communities of color that historically haven't had much access to these licenses," said Sen. Sal DiDomenico (D-Everett).

"Expanding liquor li-

censes in these Boston neighborhoods means expanding economic opportunity and equity into critical areas that have been underrepresented for too long," said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland).

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City of Somerville Honoring Serving Chief of Police Charles Femino

Continued from front page

for Over 30 Years of Distinguished Service Femino to Retire this Fall

SOMERVILLE – On behalf of the City of Somerville, Mayor Katjana Ballantyne is extending her deepest gratitude to interim Police Chief Charles Femino for his exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication to the Somerville Police Department. Chief Femino, who stepped into the role of Acting Police Chief during the height of the pandemic in December 2020, has guided the department through one of the most challenging periods in recent history, leaving a lasting impact on both the department and the community. “We will always be deeply grateful for Chief Femino’s service and dedication to

Somerville,” said Mayor Ballantyne. “His legacy of leadership and commitment to justice will continue to inspire our work as we move forward. We are deeply grateful for his deft ability to steer the department through unprecedented challenges while continuing to improve operations, enhance public safety, and advance our goals for community-focused policing. His tenure has been nothing short of remarkable.” Chief Femino’s career in law enforcement spans over three decades, beginning with his distinguished service in the Somerville Police Department from 1984 to 2014. During his tenure, he served in several key roles, including Chief of Detectives for over 15 years, Deputy Chief, and Acting Chief from 2013 to 2014.

After his initial retirement from the Somerville Police Department, Chief Femino continued his public service as the Chief of Police for Endicott College before returning to Somerville to serve as Acting Chief for over three years, allowing the City to recruit a successor to continue his important work in Somerville. A highly respected figure within the department and beyond, Chief Femino holds a Juris Doctor from the New England School of Law, a Master’s in Education from Boston University, and a Bachelor’s in Criminal Science from Northeastern University. His academic achievements, coupled with his extensive experience, have made him a formidable leader and an invaluable asset to the Somerville Police Department.



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One blessing box is located at Statue Park in Davis Square and the other is located at Union Square, Plaza in Union Square.
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Join Somerville's 2024 Community Meetings Series to Learn About Latest City Initiatives from Mayor Ballantyne and City Staff

<p>August 26, 2024 thesomerville-newsweekly Leave a comment</p> <p>Meetings for all seven wards will be held Mid-September through Mid-October</p> <p>SOMERVILLE-Community members are invited to join Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and Somerville City Council at the 2024 City Hall Community Meetings. Join us to get an overview of the latest City news, learn more about City programs and initiatives, meet your neighbors, find ways to get involved, and talk with elected officials and City staff.</p> <p>The in-person meetings kick off with a social half-hour with free pizza and kid-friendly, healthy snacks, where you can chat one-on-one with elected officials including the Mayor and your Ward City Councilor or At-Large City Councilors as well as staff about issues important to you.</p> <p>Mayor Ballantyne and City staff will then share updates on projects in your neighborhood, citywide initiatives, and a look at neighborhood crime stats followed by a roughly 20-min-</p>	<p>ute open Q&A.</p> <p>All Ward meetings will be held in person and one all-virtual, all-ward meeting will be held on Zoom and will be accessible online or by any phone. Two additional, all-ward meetings will take place in person: one in Portuguese and one in Spanish. All in-person meetings will be recorded for later on-demand or TV viewing.</p> <p>Fall 2024 Community Meeting Schedule</p> <p>Meetings run from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., with refreshments and meet-and-greets starting at 6 p.m.</p> <p>Unsure about which ward you live in? Find out with the MySomerville address lookup tool at http://www.somervillema.gov/mysomerville.</p> <p>Ward 4 (Winter Hill, Ten Hills, and more):</p> <p>Date: Wednesday, September 18</p> <p>Location: Healey School Cafeteria, 5 Meacham St.</p> <p>Ward 3 (N. Union Sq., Prospect Hill, Spring Hill, Central Hill, and more):</p>	<p>Date: Monday, September 23</p> <p>Location: Somerville High School Cafeteria, 81 Highland Ave.</p> <p>Ward 7 (West Somerville, Teele Sq., and more):</p> <p>Date: Tuesday, September 24</p> <p>Location: West Somerville Neighborhood School Cafeteria, 177 Powder House Blvd.</p> <p>All Ward Meeting in Portuguese:</p> <p>Date: Monday, September 30</p> <p>Location: East Somerville Community School Cafeteria, 50 Cross St.</p> <p>Details: This meeting will also be livestreamed on the City of Somerville YouTube page and shared on the Portuguese language Facebook page fb.com/SomervilleCidade.</p> <p>Ward 5 (Magoun Sq., NE Ball Sq., Cedar & Lowell St. areas, NW Porter Sq., and more):</p> <p>Date: Tuesday, October 1</p> <p>Location: Kennedy School Cafeteria, 5 Cherry St.</p>	<p>Ward 1 (East Somerville, Assembly Sq., and more):</p> <p>Date: Tuesday, October 8</p> <p>Location: East Somerville Community School Cafeteria, 50 Cross St.</p> <p>Ward 6 (Greater Davis Sq. neighborhood and more):</p> <p>Date: Wednesday, October 9</p> <p>Location: Somerville Community Baptist Church, 31 College Ave.</p> <p>All Ward Meeting in Spanish:</p> <p>Date: Tuesday, October 15</p> <p>Location: East Somerville Community School Cafeteria, 50 Cross St.</p> <p>Details: This meeting will also be livestreamed on the City of Somerville YouTube page and shared on the Spanish language Facebook page fb.com/SomervilleCiudad.</p> <p>Ward 2 (S. Union Sq., Perry and Lincoln Park neighborhoods, Beacon St. area, and more):</p> <p>Date: Wednesday, October 16</p> <p>Location: Argenziano School Cafeteria, 290 Washington St.</p>
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CAP LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES (H 2944)

<p>By Bob Katzen</p> <p>The House gave initial approval to legislation that would allow cities and towns to impose a cap on local property taxes paid by low-income seniors over 65. The cap would apply to single filer seniors with incomes of less than \$50,000 and married filers with incomes</p>	<p>below \$60,000. The senior's assets would have to be less than \$75,000, excluding their primary residence and they would also be allowed to own one motor vehicle.</p> <p>Supporters said the bill would not have any financial impact on the state but would simply create a process for cities and towns to im-</p>	<p>pose property tax caps for seniors within the specified income and asset limits. They argued that the bill would mean municipalities can decide if and how they provide real estate tax relief to lower-income seniors, allowing cities and towns more flexibility to address the needs of their communities and further the state's commitment</p>	<p>to lowering costs for seniors and ensuring our aging population can remain in their homes.</p> <p>"I'm glad to see this bill continuing to move through the process," said sponsor Rep. Adam Scanlon (D-North Attleborough). "We accomplished a lot last year with the \$1 billion tax cut we passed,</p>
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which included legislation I filed to raise the senior circuit breaker tax credit. We need to do as much as possible to lighten the load on seniors who have built their lives here and are now on fixed incomes, and that's why I filed this bill to give cities and towns flexibility to cap property taxes for low-income seniors."

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Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line: Somerville's Rat Infestation is Getting Worse

Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line,

These are photos of my son's car from last night. The rats got underneath the hood and ate his wires and belt. One of the rats in the photo is alive.

One is dead, probably from indigestion, but this piece of work of an absentee mayor that we have is not doing a thing about it. People cannot even go in their own backyards in fear of being overtaken by rats.

I know that if you were the mayor today the situation would've been solved just like you promised in your campaign speech when you ran for mayor. It's sad but people should've listened to you, but now they are suffering. Hopefully, you will run for mayor again.

Sincerely,
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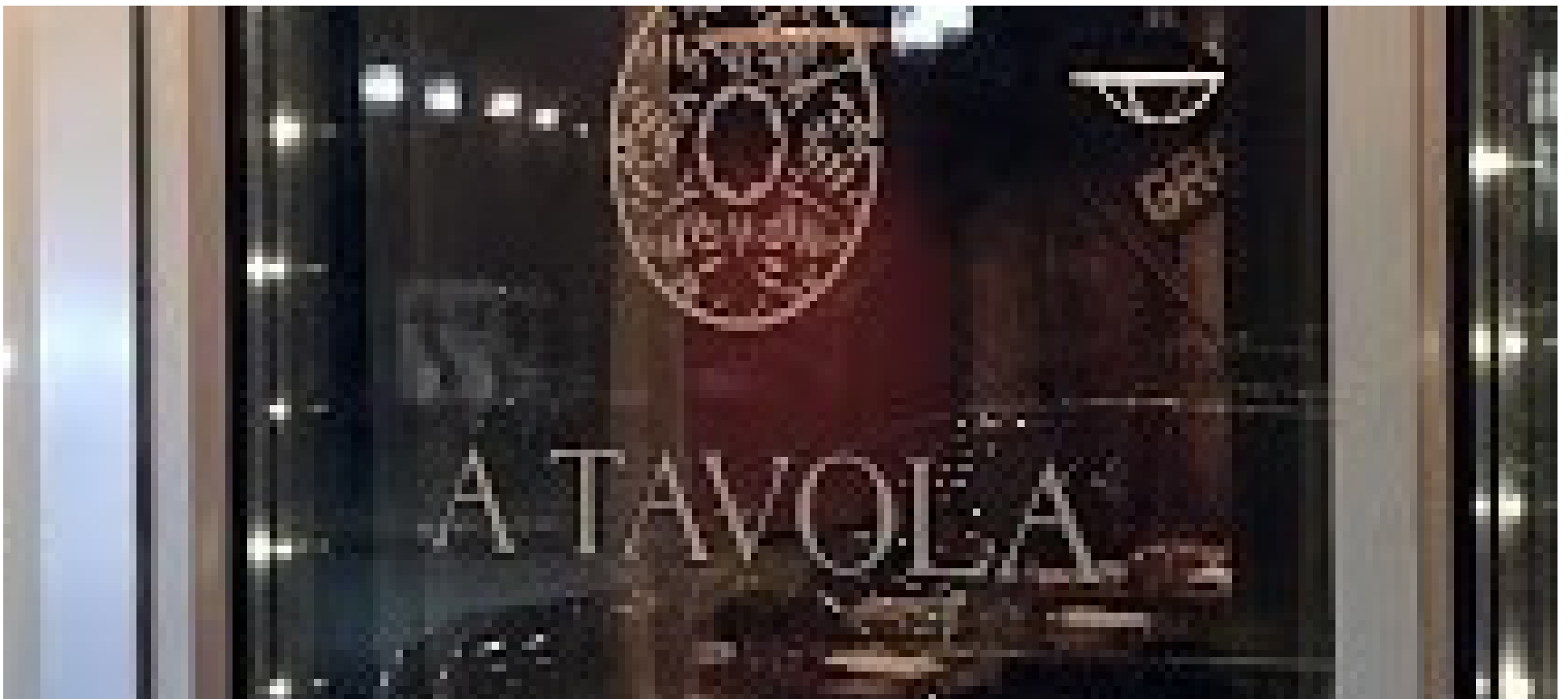
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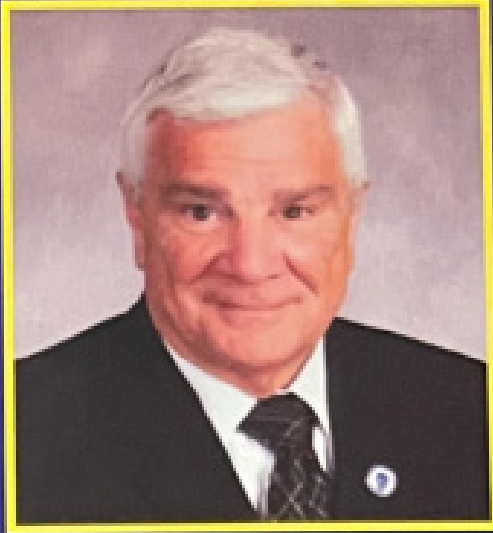


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