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VOL.1 NO.329-240

SOMERVILLE/MEDFORD MASS.

Tuesday December 17th, 2024

Jake Wilson Announces Candidacy for Somerville Mayor



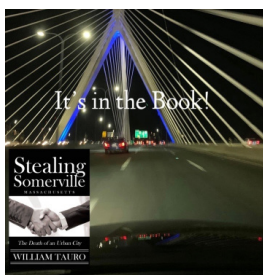
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NEWS TALK OUT
LOUD/SPEAK UP



Somerville Police
Real Life Somerville
Police Stories Page



Medford Police Congratulates Newest Detective



Continued to page 17

Somerville Opens Overnight Warming Center for 2025 Winter Season



Continued to page 16



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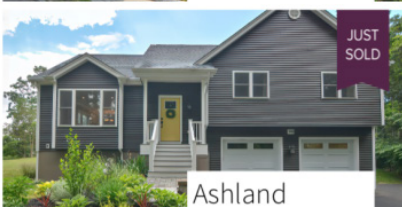
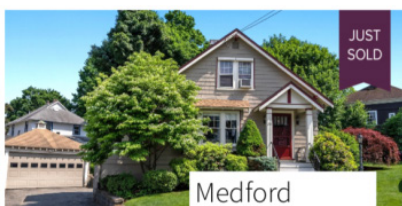
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Somerville/Medford Remembering Rocco DiRenzo



Rocco DiRenzo, age 82, of Medford passed away on Monday, December 9th. Born and raised in Lettomanopello, Italy, he

was the son of the late Bartalomeo and Filomena (D'Alfonzo) DiRenzo. Rocco immigrated to the United States in 1965, settling first in Cambridge. Years later he and his family moved to Medford, where he lived for 50 years.

Rocco was the owner and operator of a construction and real estate development company. He was a hard working individual. He was very social and active in the community. Rocco was a member of the Lions Club and the

Masons, and was vice president of the Italian American Federation. He was the owner of his own club, Paesani d'Italia and also owned a home in Italy which he loved to visit and spend time with extended family and friends.

Rocco was the beloved husband of Iolanda (Sabatini) DiRenzo, and the devoted father of Vilma Falso, Diana MacKenzie and Luigi DiRenzo. He was the loving grandfather of Gianna, Robert "Tino", Joseph, Robert "Bobby", Julia and Lillian "Lilly",

and the dear brother of Luigi "Gino" DiRenzo and the late Antonietta, Nicolo, Lucia and Giuseppina. He is survived by many loving nieces and nephews.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to visit with Rocco's family in the Dello Russo Funeral Home, 306 Main St., Medford, on Wednesday, December 18th from 4 to 7 PM, and again on Thursday, December 19th at 9 AM, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial celebrated in St. Joseph Church,

118 High St., Medford at 10 AM. Services will conclude with entombment at Woodlawn Cemetery, Everett.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent in Rocco's name to the American Cancer Society online at <https://donate.cancer.org>.



Somerville/Medford Remembering Rose M. Marinello



Obituary

Rose M. Marinello, who passed away at home in Somerville, on Monday, December 9, 2024, at the age of 94. Rose was born in Watertown, MA, to the late Antonio and Jennie (Donato) Scaltreto, and spent her life dedicated to the love and care of her family.

A devoted and nurturing soul, Rose's greatest joy

came from being surrounded by her loved ones. She was a woman of unparalleled warmth, always putting others first, and there was nothing she enjoyed more than cooking a delicious meal for her family. The sight of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren enjoying the fruits of her labor brought her immense happiness, and she proudly celebrated their many accomplishments.

Beyond her family, Rose had a deep love for nature. On warm, sunny days, she could often be found in her garden, tending to it with great care and attention. Her love of nature also extended to her artistic side—Rose

was a talented painter, and her creative spirit shone through in the beautiful pieces she created.

Rose's memory will be cherished by all who knew her, particularly her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who were the pride of her life. She leaves behind a legacy of love, kindness, and the countless happy moments she shared with her family.

Beloved wife of the late Luigi Marinello. Devoted mother of Frank Marinello and his partner Marion Davis of Somerville, Louis Marinello and his wife Ida of Middleton, and the late Anthony Marinello and his surviving wife Janice. Cherished grandmother

of Louis Marinello Jr and his wife Jenna, Shelby R. Shackleton and her husband Sean, Anthony "Tony" Marinello and Michael "Mike" Marinello. Loving great grandmother of Vincenzo, Luca and Dante. Dear mother-in-law of the late Debra Marinello and the sister of 9 late siblings. Also survived by many loving nieces, nephews and friends.

A prayer service will be held in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home 855 Broadway (Powder House Sq.) on Saturday, December 14th at 11:00AM.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to at-

tend.

Calling hours will be held Saturday morning from 9:00AM to 11:00AM.

Services will conclude with interment at St. Patrick Cemetery, Watertown.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made in Rose's name to the Glioblastoma Research Organization 2045 Biscayne BLVD #189 Miami, FL 33137 or Glioblastoma Research Organization 447 Broadway, 2nd Floor #41 New York, NY 10013.

Somerville/Medford Remembering Daniel Joseph MacInnes



Obituary

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Daniel Joseph MacInnes, beloved son of Ernest MacInnes of Somerville and the late Irene (Chartrand) MacInnes.

Danny was a lifelong resident of Somerville where he grew up surrounded by many cousins and friends who were an important part of his life.

He was a cherished brother to Deborah Leavitt and her husband Jack Leavitt of Winchester, Margaret ("Princess") MacInnes of Charlestown and Thomas MacInnes of Tewksbury. Daniel was preceded in death by his brothers Ernest Michael MacInnes and Kevin Scott MacInnes, his beloved grandmother Margaret

Chartrand and his Aunt Helen Marshall.

Daniel leaves behind his friend and cousin Sharon Lyons of Meredith, NH and several loving nieces and nephews who will cherish his memory.

Daniel found happiness in life's simple pleasures, especially spending time with his loving family and fishing. Danny will always be remembered for his incredible sense of humor, his kindness along with his unwavering courage in the face of adversity.

Calling Hours will be held in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home, 855 Broadway (Powder House Sq.) Somerville on Sunday, December 15th from 2:00PM ~ 5:00PM. Relatives and friends invited to attend.

A private burial will take place at Oak Grove Cemetery, Medford.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Danny's memory can be made to Care Dimensions Hospice, 75 Sylvan Street, Suite B-102 Danvers, MA 01923 – <http://www.caredimensions.org> or in recognition

of the exceptional care provided by the Cambridge Hospital at Cambridge Health Alliance <http://www.challiance.org/donate>





Jake Wilson Announces Candidacy for Somerville Mayor



SOMERVILLE, MA — Councilor-At-Large Jake Wilson is launching a campaign for mayor in the 2025 Somerville municipal election. A two-term Councilor-At-Large, Wilson is looking to bring accessible, collaborative, and decisive leadership to the job.

With a focus on innovative problem solving and communication, Wilson’s time on the City Council has seen him serve as the chair of the Finance Committee since 2022.

As Finance chair, he has overseen and overhauled the annual budget review and introduced a new process for the council to identify its top shared budget priorities. Prior to his election to the City Council, Wilson worked in journalism and communications before moving into community non-profit administration in 2017.

“I have a proven track record of inclusive, transformative leadership and bringing Somerville

organizations forward with revamped communications, operations, and governance,” Wilson said. “As your mayor, I will be engaged with the public and available to my constituents. My door is always open and I’ll hold regular Thursday evening office hours to meet with the public. I’m constantly listening and asking questions from a drive to know everything possible about what’s going on in the organization. We should always be looking to improve. Whether we’re struggling or doing well at a particular thing, we can always do better.”

“With the right leadership, I believe Somerville can be a model municipal government. I want the City of Somerville to be an employer where top talent wants to come work – and keep working. By recruiting and retaining skilled workers and using data-informed approaches to work smarter, faster,

and more efficiently, I know we can better deliver programs and services that improve the lives of Somerville residents of all ages, small business owners, and local workers,” commented Wilson.

“It’s critical for people to know what’s happening in their city, and I see a great opportunity to transform how we communicate and engage with the public. The City needs to have two-way communication with constituents in their preferred medium and language,” says Wilson. “I also intend to launch a map-based information portal with up-to-date information on all public and private construction projects, including project details, plans, benefits, any permits, and costs and the anticipated completion date for public projects. We know the public wants this information and we need to make it readily available in one place.”

Wilson’s mayoral campaign will focus on improving operations and communications while pursuing equitable policies that address the housing affordability and stability crises, implement proven effective public health and public safety strategies, invest in our youth, support working families, value our seniors and allow them to age in place, do better on accessibility, and meet our climate goals.

A resident of Somerville for over two decades, Wilson lives in Winter Hill with his wife, Catherine, a biotech medicinal chemist, and their children: Ingrid (age 13) and Margot (age 10), who attend the Healey School.

For more information about Jake Wilson’s campaign for mayor in 2025 or to donate, please visit <https://www.jakeforsomerville.org>

“On Air with Billy Tauro” Episode 2. Nothing ever filtered, nothing ever watered-down, just the plain true facts! Enjoy!

“On Air with Billy Tauro” Episode 2. Nothing ever filtered, nothing ever watered-down, just the plain true facts! Enjoy!

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Somerville Community Votes to Increase Community Preservation Act Funding

A 3% surcharge will boost funding for affordable housing, open space, historic preservation projects, and more

SOMERVILLE- In a resounding show of community spirit and vision, Somerville residents have voted to double the Community Preservation Act (CPA) surcharge from 1.5% to 3%. This landmark decision will increase funding for vital projects, helping to create a more affordable, greener, and culturally rich Somerville.

Appearing as Question 6 on the November 2024 ballot, the measure received overwhelming support, with 25,282 residents voting in favor. The new funding will be a game-changer for critical initiatives, from affordable housing and open space improvements to the preservation of Somerville's unique historical assets and the creation of vibrant recreational spaces.

"This is Somerville at its finest," said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. "Our residents have shown their unwavering commitment to equity, sustainability, and community. By

doubling our CPA funding, we are doubling down on a future that honors our history while paving the way for progress. I can't wait to see the incredible projects we'll bring to life together."

The updated surcharge will take effect in FY2026, starting July 1, 2025. Low-income property owners and low-to-moderate-income seniors may apply for annual exemptions, ensuring equitable access to this initiative.

A Decade of Transformative Change

Since its adoption in 2014, the CPA has fueled over \$35 million in transformative projects citywide.

Recent highlights include:

The restoration of the Somerville City Hall clock tower and roof, preserving a treasured landmark.

The creation of Henry Hansen Park, a vibrant green space near Magoun Square.

A \$1.4 million contribution to the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust, advancing housing equity and stability.

With the new funding, Somerville is poised to accelerate these successes, making a meaningful impact across every neighborhood.

Learn More

Explore the Community Preservation Act's past achievements and future possibilities on the CPA page of the City of Somerville website.

To learn more about the CPA and the projects it funds, visit the Community Preservation Act page

Join the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust



SOMERVILLE - The City of Somerville is seeking a new member to join the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust (SAHT) in a volunteer role. This vacancy is for a representative of a Somerville nonprofit organization whose primary mission is affordable hous-

ing. If you're passionate about advancing affordable housing in our community, this is a great opportunity to make an impact.

What is the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust? The SAHT is dedicated to creating and preserving affordable homes for renters and prospective owners with low and moderate incomes in Somerville. Through a public process, Trustees evaluate project and program proposals and approve funding allocations to help increase the supply of affordable housing in our city.

Who Can Join? Eligible applicants for the cur-

rent vacancy must be affiliated with a Somerville-based nonprofit organization focused on affordable housing. This includes employees or board members of qualifying organizations.

What is the Time Commitment? The Trust meets virtually on the second Thursday of each month at 5:15 p.m., with meetings typically lasting around 1.5 hours. Additional time for review of documents and occasional special meetings may be needed, for an estimated total of 4 hours per month.

What is the Appointment

Process? Members are appointed to two-year terms in a volunteer capacity. The SAHT is composed of nine Trustees, with six members appointed by the Mayor after a review by the Appointments Advisory Committee. Three members serve in an ex-officio capacity.

How Do I Apply? Applications are due by December 20, 2024. Please submit a resume, cover letter, and any relevant supplemental materials.

Where to Apply: Applications can be sent via email or U.S. Mail to:

Email: pgoldstein@somervillema.gov
Mail: Paul Goldstein, City of Somerville, OSPCD Housing Division, 50 Evergreen Ave., Somerville, MA 02145

For questions or more information, contact Paul Goldstein at pgoldstein@somervillema.gov or call 617-625-6600 ext. 2587.

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.

Best of luck and we can't wait to see all the good things that you will bring to the VFW under your guidance and leadership!

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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.

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Thank you for your continued support.



MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS (S 2491)

By Bob Katzen

On October 26, 2023, the Senate 38-0, approved and sent to the House a bill that would require all prisons, homeless shelters and K-12 schools to maintain free menstrual products, including sanitary napkins, tampons and underwear liners in private and public restrooms and to make them available in a “convenient manner that does not stigmatize any persons seeking the products.”

Supporters said that according to the Massachusetts Menstrual Equity Coalition, approximately one in seven children in Massachusetts is living in poverty and struggles to pay for menstrual prod-

ucts. They argued that research shows that the inability to access menstrual products affects students’ class attendance.

They also noted that women facing homelessness or who are incarcerated face high barriers to access, with Massachusetts shelters reporting that menstrual products are among the least donated items. They argued that restricted access in shelters and correctional facilities means that products can be used as bargaining chips and tools of control for people in vulnerable circumstances.

“I learned about this issue from young people in Medford High School, Somerville High School

and Cambridge Rindge and Latin who took leadership at the local level to make menstrual hygiene products available in their own communities,” said sponsor Sen. Pat Jehlen (D-Somerville). “This is a true grassroots movement starting with girls talking about their experiences of missing valuable class time or feeling embarrassed to access products during the school day. These conversations have already started to change the culture and have motivated us to expand this across the state.”

“Period products are not luxuries, but necessities required for people’s basic needs, health and hygiene,” said Sen. Julian Cyr (D-Truro), Senate

Chair of the Committee on Public Health. “Today’s passage of the ... bill affirms that women and all menstruating people deserve access to menstrual products. An inaccessibility of period products speaks to the longstanding and persistent misogyny in our society, a bias that intersects with inequalities in housing, education, socioeconomics and beyond. By ensuring better access to these products, we support further access to essential health needs regardless of our situation in life.

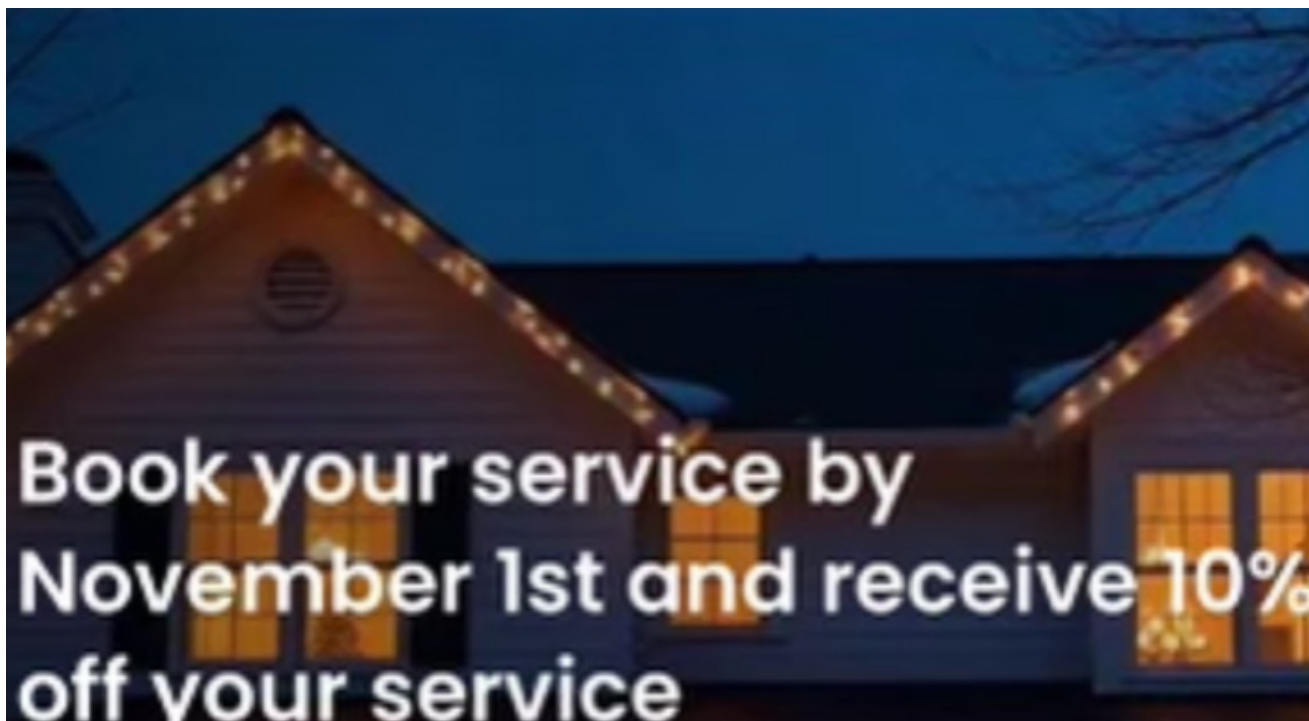
During floor debate, Cyr sarcastically commented, “I think it’s pretty obvious that if most men could menstruate, these products would be as ubiq-

uitous and free as toilet paper.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the bill.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

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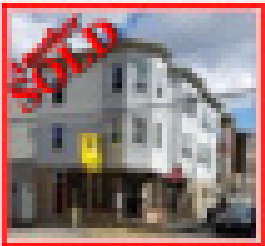


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The Somerville/Medford News Weekly

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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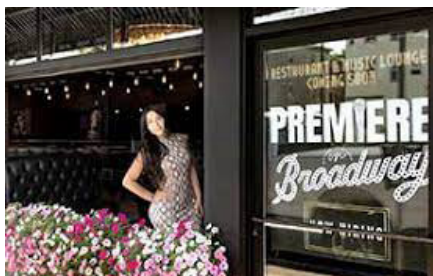
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HENRY HANSEN PARK RIBBON CUTTING

Please join us as we rededicate Henry Hansen Park, honoring Somerville native Sgt. Henry Hansen, and all Somerville veterans.

Sgt. Hansen served in the 5th Marine Division on Iwo Jima, helped raise the first flag on Mt. Suribachi and died in battle six days later.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7th 9:00 - 10:00 AM

70 Partridge Avenue, at the corner of Medford Street



Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Ward 5 City Councilor Naima Sait, Director of Veterans Services Jerome Thomas, and honored guests invite you to this much anticipated event.

Persons with disabilities who need ADA accommodations to access this event, please contact 311 (617-666-3311) in advance. The City of Somerville can provide you with an interpreter in your language for free. To request an interpreter, please contact us at somervillema.gov/ContactSomerville or call 311 (617-666-3311) at least 7 days in advance of this event. For more information contact Ann Franzen: AFranzen@somervillema.gov

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COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES (H 5139)

By Bob Katzen

The House approved and sent to the Senate a new version of legislation, originally sponsored by Gov. Maura Healey, that would prevent commercial drivers from losing their licenses due to passenger vehicle offenses they committed prior to September 30, 2005.

The Registry of Motor Vehicles recently notified hundreds of bus and truck drivers that they were ineligible for commercial licenses due to at least two past major offenses, blindsiding many motorists who for years thought their infrac-

tions were behind them.

“Over time, the relevance and predictive value of these older offenses has diminished, particularly for those drivers who have remained offense-free since,” said Healey. “In most circumstances, a commercial driver who meets the safety requirements of federal law should not be disqualified from driving due solely to passenger vehicle offenses that occurred 19 or more years ago. She noted her bill would remove consideration of pre-September 30, 2005 passenger vehicle offenses from our disqualification law, except for multiple

instances of operating under the influence.

\$3.2 MILLION FOR MASSACHUSETTS COASTAL COMMUNITIES – The Healey Administration announced the awarding of \$3.2 million in grants for projects that proponents say will support the economic vitality, tourism and ecosystem health of the Bay State’s waterfront and harbors, while helping the state reach its ambitious climate resiliency goals.

“Coastal communities play a critical role in our economy,” said Gov. Healey. “The ... Grants help cities and towns

make infrastructure improvements to prepare for extreme weather caused by climate change while also investing in important blue economy businesses, commercial fishing operations and tourist and recreational enterprises.”

“These investments will support a range of critical initiatives, from coastal resilience and dredging projects to pier infrastructure enhancements that protect our shorelines,” said Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao. “By funding these efforts, we’re ensuring a safer and more enduring future for our coasts from

the North Shore to the Cape and Islands.”

“Maritime communities are important centers of economic activity, drawing many visitors each year and supporting the coastal industries that have been integral to our state’s economy,” said Undersecretary of Economic Foundations Ashley Stolba. “We are proud to fund these projects and look forward to their lasting impact on the future generations of these towns.”



Somerville Kiwanis Donate Hundreds of Toys to Toys For Tots Program

SOMERVILLE On Thursday, December 12th, Somerville Kiwanis Club members were joined by our good friends from the Somerville Rotary Club and Somerville Lions Club for our annual Toys For Tots luncheon meeting. Three members of the Marine Corps joined us for this special tri-club meeting.

Everyone attending brought unwrapped toys for donating to the United States Marine Corps, Toys For Tots program. In addition to more than two hundred fifty new, unwrapped toys, the Marines were presented with a check for \$2000.00 from Middlesex Federal Savings Bank plus another \$50.00 from a bank employee. The check was presented to Marine Sgt. Guzman by member Adam Portney from Middlesex Federal Savings bank.

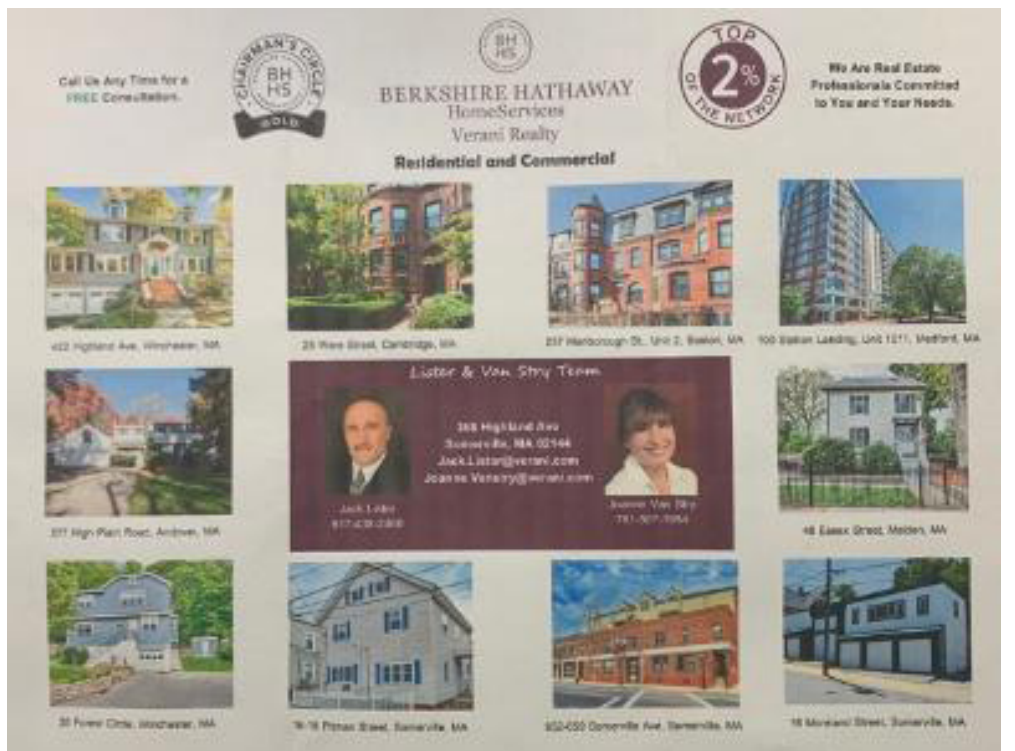
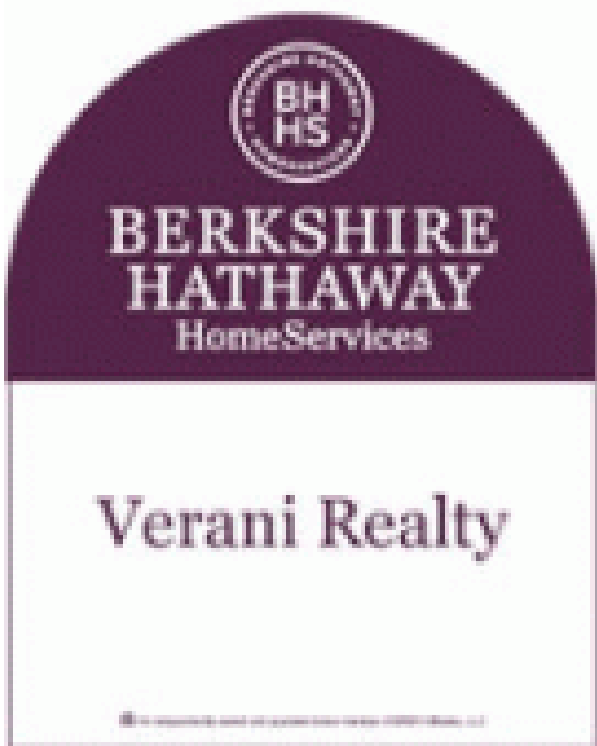
Our meeting began with as always with the pledge of allegiance and opening prayer, after which everyone present sang the Marine Corps Hymn

in honor of our Marine Corps guests.

At the end of the meeting, the members helped to load the Marine's van with the hundreds of donated toys which will make Christmas a little happier for children in need in our area.

President Tom Austin and Co-President Dawn Austin thanked the members and our Lions and Rotary Club friends for their support and special thanks to the Marine guests, Staff Sergeant Guzman, Lance Corporal Laub and Sergeant Abako for their service. Special thanks also to Program Chairman, Distinguished Past President Jay Lynch for another successful toy drive.

See photos of the event in separate attachment or may be downloaded from our Facebook page, Kiwanis Club of Somerville.



Our Lady of the Assumption School Christmas Craft Fair

2024 Toys For Local Children Event



Please Join us For Toys for Local Children 2024! December 7th, 2024 from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm at the George Dilboy Post. There will be dinner, music and raffles. Tickets \$20.00 . Tickets can be purchased by using our vemo @toys-forlocalchildren. Please inbox me and we will get this done we will have a fun night that night! Thank you.



Join the Somerville Mayor's Appointments Advisory Committee



SOMERVILLE – Are you passionate about community engagement and civic responsibility? The Mayor's Appointments Advisory Committee (AAC) is seeking two volunteers to join its efforts in ensuring fair, informed, and nonpartisan recommendations for appointments to Somerville's regulatory and decision-making boards and commissions.

About the AAC
The AAC is a five-member volunteer body tasked

with reviewing applications and recommending candidates for open seats on 14 critical boards and commissions in Somerville, including:

- Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Board of Health
- Condominium Review Board
- Conservation Commission
- Design Review Committee
- Ethics Commission
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Housing Authority Board
- Job Creation and Retention Trust Board
- Licensing Commission
- Planning Board
- Redevelopment Authority
- Traffic Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals

The AAC does not oversee reappointments but plays a key role in ensuring new appointees are well-suited to their roles.

Responsibilities and Commitment

When there is an open seat on a board or commission, the AAC meets bi-weekly on Wednesdays from 7:00–9:00 p.m. via virtual platforms. Members review applications and background materials, interview finalists, and recommend two candidates per vacancy to the Mayor. Members are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

Why Join the AAC?

This is a unique opportunity to make a meaningful

contribution to Somerville's future by helping shape the leadership of its boards and commissions. Your work will ensure these bodies are staffed with individuals who bring the expertise, dedication, and perspective needed to serve the city effectively.

How to Apply

Submit the following materials:

- A resume
 - A cover letter
 - A statement of interest
- Applications can be submitted:

Online: somervillema.gov/besomerville
By email: Send to careers@somervillema.gov with the subject line "AAC

Member Application
By mail: Address to City Hall, Attn: HR – Kristen Hill, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143
Applications must be received by Friday, January 17, 2025.

Questions?
Contact Kristen Hill, Recruitment & Retention Manager:

Email: KHill@somervillema.gov
Phone: 617-625-6600
Join us in fostering a more equitable and effective government for Somerville! Apply today to make a difference.

Donate to Local Holiday Gift Drives at City Buildings Through Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2024



City supporting two local holiday gift drives for children and teens

SOMERVILLE—Mayor Katjana Ballantyne announces the City's annual support of local holiday gift and toy donation drives. In the giving spirit of the season, the City is placing toy and gift donation collection boxes at City buildings, libraries, and firehouses from Tuesday, De-

ember 3, through Wednesday, December 18. Donated gifts will support two community gift drives for families in need of gifts for children and teens this holiday season.

All gifts will be distributed to families by two local efforts: Toys for Local Children, a long-standing local charity that organizes annual holiday gift drives, and The Somerville Toy Drive, an initiative organized by community members (including the organizers of last year's MAMAS Mutual Aid Medford and Somerville annual gift drive as well as other residents). More information on their gift drives and other ways to help can be found at toysforlocalchildren.org or via email at somervilletoydrive@gmail.com.

What to Donate:

To donate, please bring new, unwrapped toys and gifts for children as well as age-appropriate gifts for teens. Please donate only new items. Gifts are needed for all ages from infants to age 14. Gifts are especially welcome for ages 0-2 years and 8-14.

Where to Donate:

Donate at the following Somerville City buildings, libraries, and Firehouses. Collection boxes will be in place from Tuesday, December 3, through Wednesday, December 18, 4:30 p.m.:

City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue,

- Welcome Desk, 1st floor, and Mayor's Office, 2nd floor
- Somerville Central Library, 79 Highland Avenue
- Somerville East Library, 115 Broadway
- Somerville West Branch Library, 40 College Avenue
- City Hall Annex, 50 Evergreen Street
- Dept. of Public Works (DPW) Building, One Franey Road
- Council on Aging Offices, 167 Holland Street
- Somerville Police Headquarters lobby, 220 Washington Street
- Fire Stations:
 - Somerville Fire Department Headquarters, 266 Broadway
 - Highland Ave. Station, 265 Highland Avenue
 - Union Square Station, 255 Somerville Avenue
 - Teele Square Station, 6 Newbury

Street (corner of Holland Street)
Lowell Street Station, 651 Somerville Avenue (corner of Lowell Street)
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.

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\$5 MILLION TO PROTECT FOREST LANDS



By Bob Katzen

The Healey Administration announced more than \$5 million in grants to protect forest land which will be managed as reserves. These projects are designed to fight climate change and allow forests to mature, strengthening how these habitats

store carbon. The grant program, a result of the Forest as Climate Solutions Initiative, aims to designate 10 percent of Massachusetts forests as reserves, where active management is limited and natural processes play out.

“Forests are our best natural carbon sinks,” said Energy and En-

vironmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper. “As trees age, they absorb and store more carbon dioxide – crucial in helping us fight climate change. By supporting community and land trust efforts to limit land conversion and increase permanent land conservation, we are preserving forests for generations

to come.”

“Few things are more important than protecting our environment, and I’m elated that our state is preserving these beautiful pieces of land in Ashland and around the entire commonwealth,” said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland).

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SOMERVILLE DPW EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH MATT JOHNSON

Congratulations to Somerville Department of Public Works Employee Matt Johnson for being selected as "SOMERVILLE DPW EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH"



\$3 MILLION FOR EDUCATION OF EARLY EDUCATORS (H 4800)

By Bob Katzen

House 154-2, overrode Gov. Healey's veto of \$3 million (reducing funding from \$8 million to \$5 million) for a program that provides professional development and higher education opportunities and supports for statewide recruitment and training

needs of early educators.

"I am reducing this item to the amount projected to be necessary," said Healey in her veto message. "Due to substantial resources made available in this budget for MassEducate, critical wrap-around supports for students and new early educator scholarship and loan forgiveness

programs, the portion of funding vetoed here is no longer needed to meet the purpose of this item."

The Senate did not act on the veto so the veto stands and the \$3 million was eliminated.

(A "Yes" vote is for the \$3 million. A "No" vote is against it.)Rep. Christine

Barber Yes Rep. Mike Connolly Yes Rep. Paul Donato Yes Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven Yes



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Somerville Opens Overnight Warming Center for 2025 Winter Season



Center Provides Hot Meals, Bathrooms, and Safe Sleeping Spaces for Residents Experiencing Homelessness

SOMERVILLE – Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, together with the Somerville Office of Health and Human Services (HHS), is announcing the opening of the 2025 Overnight Warming Center to support adults experiencing homelessness.

Since opening on December 9, the warming center has already welcomed almost 30 guests and is operating successfully. Clients are accessing hot meals, safe sleeping spaces, and essential services, ensuring they receive the care and support they need.

The Warming Center will operate seven nights a week from 6:45 p.m. to 7 a.m. at the Cummings School (42 Prescott St.).

The center will remain open through Sunday, April 13, 2025. Community members interested in supporting the warming center can donate supplies. The center is currently in need of unused socks and cold-weather treats such as hot chocolate, assorted chocolates, and packaged cookies. To learn more, please email warmingcenter@somervillema.gov. The warming center is only available to adults experienc-

ing homelessness. Families or individuals with children seeking shelter should contact the Somerville Office of Housing Stability at 617-625-6600, Ext. 2581, for referrals to family-specific resources and shelters.

Community members interested in learning more about the Somerville Overnight Warming Center, visit somervillema.gov/warmingcenter or email warmingcenter@somervillema.gov.

This Week's QUOTABLE QUOTES On Beacon Hill

By Bob Katzen

“Expanding our mountain biking trail system will create destinations that connect visitors to our rural communities and the mountains and forests that surround them. It is without a doubt, that investing in accessible outdoor recreation is beneficial not only for our state’s regional economies but also for our health.”

— Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation Director

Paul Jahnige on the announcement of \$300,000 in grants to build and maintain destination mountain biking trail systems that include accessibility features, offer scenic routes and stimulate rural economies.

“In Middlesex County we have had multiple businesses and municipalities impacted by cyberattacks and data breaches. These incidents erode our sense of safety and security and can cost victims millions to get their systems back up and running.”

— District Attorney Marian Ryan speaking at her Ransomware Response Conference for more than 100 industry leaders at hospitals, schools, municipalities and businesses.

“We actively solicit input from attorneys and other court users, as well as court employees, about what we can do better. In addition, we seek public comments on rule changes. And we recently resumed our Judicial Performance Evaluation program by sending out surveys

about judges in selected courts to over 10,000 lawyers and over 1,000 court employees, as well as to jurors.”

—Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Kimberly Budd giving her fourth annual address on the state of the judiciary to the legal community.

“This year’s Climate Ready Housing funding will enable energy retrofit improvements of nearly 1,000 homes across the state. This funding will lower costs for low- and moderate-in-

come residents, improve indoor air quality for our residents and reduce greenhouse gas emissions ... and will put us on the path to achieving the commonwealth’s net zero emissions goal while creating more resilient homes.”

—Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus on the Healey Administration awarding \$16 Million to decarbonize affordable housing.

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Medford Police Congratulates Newest Detective

We are excited to congratulate our newest detective, Patrick Doherty. Detective Doherty has been a dedicated member of our department for over a decade. His commitment to public service and proven track record make him a welcome addition to our detective division. We know Detective Doherty will continue to work tirelessly to protect and serve the citizens of Medford with the same passion and integrity that has defined his career thus far.

Please join us in congratulating Detective Patrick Doherty on this well-deserved new role. We have no doubt he will excel in his new role and be an invaluable asset to our investigative team.



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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

Blessing Backpack Checklist

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State Advances Somerville’s Funding Proposal for New PK-8 School Building



Significant step forward moves school building planning into next phase

SOMERVILLE– The City’s work to deliver a state-of-the-art school project for Somerville students is moving into the next phase in the state’s school building funding process. This afternoon, the Massachusetts School Building Authority’s (MSBA) Board of Directors voted to move Somerville’s project forward. The vote by the

MSBA Board is a required step that occurs at several points throughout the multi-year process.

Somerville’s school building project through the MSBA would address the needs of the Winter Hill Community Innovation School and potentially the Brown School.

Today’s approval means the project can enter the next phase of project development. Beginning in January 2025, the City can now start a formal procurement process to hire an Owner’s Project Manager to oversee the project, and then a Design/Architecture firm. In both processes, the School Building Committee will

be directly involved and the MSBA will ultimately need to approve the hires.

“This is the news we wanted to hear – and it is important news. As we advance through each stage of the MSBA process to seek state funding, we get closer to building the quality school our students need and deserve. I want to thank the state, our staff, and all who have supported this effort as we work toward this vital goal for our youth and our community,” said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne.

“We are extremely grateful for this continued partnership with the MSBA, and eager to continue our progress toward a new

school building particularly for our Winter Hill School community,” said Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Rubén Carmona. “Our SPS and City teams worked extremely hard over the last 270 days of our Eligibility Period to ensure we were well positioned to move into the next phase, with the blessing and support of our state partners. This vote marks a huge step forward, and we are excited to get right to work in the new year.”

To help inform decisions about the scope and location of this project, the City and Somerville Public Schools are committed to a robust and inclusive community process. This process will help inform the School

Construction Advisory Group, which will develop a recommendation to the Mayor for the scope and location of the project.

More information about community engagement and the next phase of the MSBA process will be shared via City and SPS channels and via direct outreach over the coming weeks. You can stay informed and review project milestones to date at somervillema.gov/msba.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE

By Bob Katzen

The Massachusetts Campaign for Single Payer Health Care (Mass-Care) announced the official results of its Question 6 (or 7), depending on the

district, which was on the November ballot in eleven state representative districts. The question was approved in all eleven districts with an average Yes vote of 64 percent.

The ballot question specifically asked, “Shall the representative for this district be instructed to vote for legislation to create a single-payer system of universal health care that provides all Mas-

sachusetts residents with comprehensive health care coverage including the freedom to choose doctors and other health care professionals, facilities and services and eliminates the role of insurance

companies in health care by creating an insurance trust fund that is publicly administered?”

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FRESHMAN ORIENTATION – BACK TO SCHOOL

By Bob Katzen

Twenty-two newly elected state legislators, including 19 representatives-elect and three senators-elect, attended the biennial New Legislator Acad-

emy at UMass Amherst, which Senate President Karen Spilka's office has described as "an opportunity for newly elected legislators to become familiar with experiences that they will encounter in the Legislature."

According to the State House News Service, the agenda included nearly a dozen panels, speeches and sessions, covering topics such as the budgeting process, ethics and the cadence

of legislative sessions.

According to Politico, a session on the media included "the recommendation that if a reporter calls, let it go to voicemail, or wait for them to send a text;

find out what they're calling about before you answer; and let leadership know what's up – their office may be fielding the same questions."

HIV PREVENTION DRUGS (S 2480)

By Bob Katzen

On October 26, 2023, the Senate 38-0, approved and sent to the House a bill that would allow pharmacists to prescribe, dispense and administer a short-term supply (60-days once in a two-year period) of HIV prevention drugs, known as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), to a patient without a prescription.

The bill requires pharmacists to provide counseling to the patient regarding the use of PrEP, to inform the patient's primary care doctor that the pharmacist has prescribed the drug and to connect patients without a primary care provider

with a health care provider for ongoing care and to obtain a prescription for PrEP.

Under the bill, pharmacists could only prescribe PrEP to patients who have tested negative for HIV within the past seven days, do not have HIV symptoms and are not taking medications that are not safe to use with PrEP.

Supporters say that PrEP is a life-saving medication that is nearly 100 percent effective in stopping the transmission of HIV. They note that under current law, individuals who take PrEP must make an appointment and go through their doc-

tor, a barrier that can stand in the way for people who need the medication on short notice, cannot make an appointment or cannot access medical care.

"PrEP is a game changer in HIV prevention. Yet, while this life-saving medication reduces the risk of transmission by 99 percent, it remains inaccessible for too many," said sponsor Public Health Care chair Sen. Julian Cyr. "Allowing pharmacists to prescribe and dispense PrEP on a short-term basis, similar to what's already allowed for contraceptives, would significantly increase the accessibility of this essential HIV prevention tool. With greater access to PrEP we

can narrow the gap in PrEP utilization among LGBTQ+ people of color. I am someone who uses PrEP and most of my gay, bisexual and queer friends rely on it too. With this legislation, we are once again putting people at the center of our public health policy. I'm thrilled it has passed the Senate."

"When someone is ready to begin PrEP, it is crucial that they are able to [do so] as soon as possible," said Carrie Richgels, Manager of Policy and Advocacy at Fenway Health. "At Fenway Health, we regularly work to overcome barriers that patients face due to trauma, stigma and discrimination. We know from experi-

ence that to overcome these obstacles we must meet people where they are and build trust. Trust is essential to getting people on PrEP, and a local pharmacy can provide a lower threshold of access and can be a trusted access point for those who may face discrimination in traditional healthcare settings."

(A "Yes" vote is for the bill.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

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