

City of Somerville has signed a three-year successor collective bargaining agreement with Somerville Firefighters Local 76



Continued to page 5

STREAMLINE NEW HOUSING



Continued to page 13

Somerville Toasting What the Fluff? Festival Turning 21



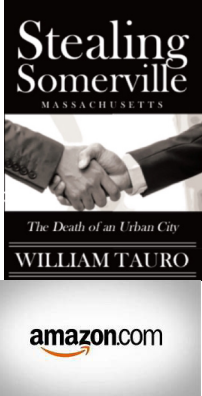
Continued to page 16

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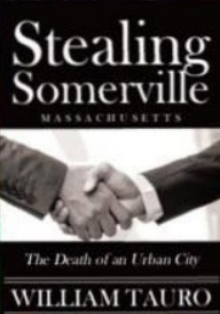
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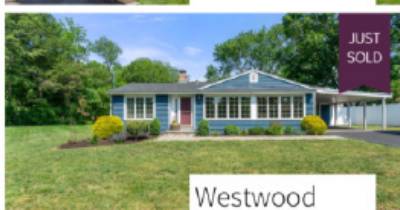
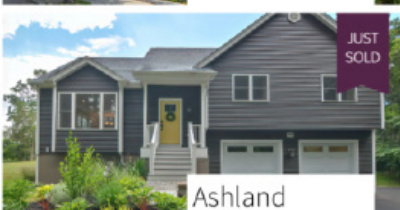
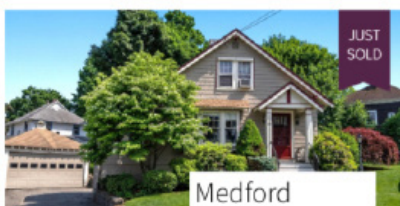
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2. Getbadged Route: Apply directly through GetBadged.com. Visit GetBadged.com, create an account, and select your preferred exam date. This is on-going.

For more details and the next steps in the new hiring process, please visit our website at medfordpolice.com/becomeapoliceofficer.

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Somerville/Medford Remembering Richard J. “Dick” Murdza



Richard J. “Dick” Murdza
Veteran
September 11, 2026

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Richard Joseph Murdza, 90, of Lexington, formerly of Medford, on September 11th, 2026, surrounded by family.

Born to Anna and Walter Murdza, Richard grew up in Somerville and attended Somerville High School. After high school, he served his country honorably in the United States Army during the Korean War. After his enlistment, he headed west to California with his long-time friend Bobby “Boris” Pickett. While in Los Ange-

les, he became an apprentice and later a journeyman cabinetmaker, beginning a lifelong love of carpentry and craftsmanship.

A visit home to Massachusetts changed the course of his life when he met his future wife Kathy at The Jumbo in Somerville. California could no longer compete, and Kathy would later say he didn’t look like anyone else in the room; he was so sharply dressed.

Richard was a truly unique person who always marched to the beat of his own drum. He was hardworking, independent, generous, and always happiest when he could be useful to someone. As Kathy would often say, “He would help anybody in need.” Whether he was lending a hand, fixing something, bringing something by, or showing up at a moment’s notice, he rarely arrived empty-handed.

Richard went on to build a career as a contractor and took enormous pride in his work. In fact, his favorite part of his job was going to

meet potential clients where he would introduce himself as “Dick from Town & Country”. His appointment book was full. After working all day, he would often have multiple appointments in the evening to make sure he provided the best for his family, putting his children through private school, good food on table, and making sure Kathy could indulge in her redecorating whims. He respected hard work and was known for being generous to the people who worked for him, providing lunch, and always making sure to clean up before customers came home.

Outside of work, Richard had no shortage of interests. He was an avid fisherman, who also loved playing golf, shooting pool, listening to jazz and consistently beating members of his family at any and all board games. He was a member of the Winter Hill Yacht Club for more than 60 years, landing his prized 1,077lb blue fin tuna. He could talk about nearly anything and usually had a story, an opinion, or a piece of advice ready.

Richard could also be counted on to say no to an invitation, attend anyway, and later admit that he had a great time.

He was raised to be tough, but over the years that toughness made plenty of room for tenderness. He became a deeply affectionate father and grandfather, never too reserved to greet his children and grandchildren with a kiss. He believed in his children and encouraged them to be capable and self-reliant. His daughter remembers how naturally he supported her, never treating being a woman as a limit on what she could learn or do. Among the many things he taught her was how to change her own oil.

Richard was a devoted husband to his beloved Kathy. After her death, his devotion to her continued. For more than 30 years, he visited her grave every day, tending the flowers and caring for the place where she rested. It was a quiet ritual that said everything about the constancy of his love.

Richard is survived by his son David and his wife Paula, his son Mark, his son Brian and wife Nicole, and his daughter Jennifer and wife Angela. He

was also proudly known as “Pa” to his grandchildren Brian, Derek, Reilly and Maebel.

He was predeceased by his brother Russell and his sister Mary Certusi and is survived by his sister Eleanor Coughlin, and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Richard will be remembered for his craftsmanship, his independence, his generosity, his style, his loyalty, and the unmistakable way he moved through the world. He was chivalrous, dependable, and always ready to help. Most of all, he will be remembered as a man who loved his family deeply and showed that love through a lifetime of doing, fixing, teaching, providing, and simply being there.

Relatives & friends are invited to attend his graveside service held at Oak Grove Cemetery, 230 Playstead Rd., Medford on Saturday October 3rd, 2026, at 11 AM. Please meet inside the main gate to join the procession.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation, 2361 Hylan Boulevard, Staten Island, NY 10306.

Somerville/Medford Remembering Nancy Jane (Noble) Barletta



Nancy Jane (Noble) Barletta
, of Medford, passed away surrounded by her loving family on Tuesday, September 15, 2026. She was 84 years old.

Nancy was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and raised in Somerville, the daughter of the late James A. and Ann (Ness) Noble. She was a proud graduate of Somerville High School, Class of 1959, and took great pride in calling Somerville home.

It was during her high school years that Nancy met the love of her life, Robert “Bob” Barletta. Bob was the captain of the football team, while

Nancy was the captain of the cheerleading team. That high school romance grew into 64 years of marriage, as Nancy and Bob went on to build a beautiful life and loving family together.

Nancy was truly a people person. Wherever she went, she made friends, and she had a special way of making everyone she met feel as though they had known her forever. She brought that same warmth and personality to her career. Starting at TWA Airlines, where she earned the distinction of Reservationist of the Year, before becoming a District Sales Manager for Avon, a position of which she was especially proud. Nancy always encouraged the ladies she worked with to have fun, enjoy what they were doing, and most importantly, make friends along the way.

After her retirement, Nancy enjoyed the simple pleasures in life. Whether at home in Medford or Cape Coral, Florida, Nancy was always playing games. Of all the games she played, howev-

er, her favorite was always found at the casino. She loved testing her luck on the nickel slots and enjoyed the excitement of trying her hand at the next big win.

Nancy also loved all things sports. If there was a game on television, chances were Nancy was watching, cheering on her favorite team or player. Her greatest joy, however, came from being a devoted supporter of her family. Family meant everything to Nancy. If one of her grandchildren had a sporting event, she would be there, cheering them on and making sure they knew they had one of their biggest fans in the stands.

Above all else, Nancy’s greatest pride and joy was her family. She had a special gift for making each of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren feel loved, supported, and important. Even during the toughest days, Nancy had a way of reminding those she loved just how much they meant to her.

Beloved wife of 64 years to Robert “Bob” W. Barletta. Devoted mother of Wendy McLellan and her husband Christopher of Melrose, Bonnie VanderZouwen and her husband Mark of Reading and Rob Barletta of Walpole. Cherished grandmother of Danielle Belanger and her husband Steven, Briana DeGeorge and her husband Dwight, Alyssa Duarte and her husband Ryan, Christina Pagano and her husband Frank, Lindsay and David VanderZouwen, Samantha, Robbie and Jessica Barletta. Loving great-grandmother of Emilia, Hallie, Everly, Frank and Emmett. Dear sister of Louise Romano and her husband Johnny, Diane Hayden and her husband Walter and James Noble and his wife Nabila. She is also lovingly survived by many loving nieces, nephews and extended family members.

For the last year of her life, Nancy was lovingly cared for at home by her husband, Bob, and granddaughter, Briana, who were by her side throughout, providing her

with constant love, comfort, and companionship. Their devotion to Nancy was unwavering, and they were supported by the compassionate team at Beth Israel Lahey Health at Home, especially Shanshan Ou and Ashley Keating.

The funeral mass will be celebrated in St. Raphael Church, 512 High St., Medford at 9:30AM. Relatives and friends are invited to attend.

Calling Hours will be held on Friday, September 18th from 4:00PM to 7:00PM at the George L. Doherty Funeral Home 855 Broadway (Powder House Sq.) Somerville.

Services will conclude with interment at Oak Grove Cemetery, Medford.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that those wishing to honor Nancy’s memory consider making a donation in her name to Beth Israel Lahey Health at Home at <https://give.bilh.org/page/1002931/donate/1>.



City of Somerville, Firefighters Association Local 76 Sign Three-Year Agreement



New contract delivers annual wage increases, enhanced emergency medical response compensation, expanded leave benefits, and cancer-screening support

SOMERVILLE—The City of Somerville and the Firefighters Association of Somerville, Local 76, have signed a three-year successor collective bargaining

agreement covering July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2029, that delivers enhanced wage, leave, and other benefits.

The agreement provides a 2% cost-of-living adjustment in each year of the contract. It also includes modifications to the Local 76 pay scale that provide an additional 2% increase for firefighters with 20

years or more of service. “Local 76 would like to thank Mayor Wilson and his team for keeping true to their word and putting the work in to get this agreement done. This is what bargaining in good faith looks like, having a contract done in a timely manner and not waiting years to come to an agreement like we had become so accustomed to in the past,” said Local 76 President Mike Jefferson.

Additional provisions include: An increase in the annual EMT certification stipend to \$6,000; A new emergency medical response stipend in recognition of firefighters’ administration of Narcan, use of LUCAS devices, and delivery of other emergency medical treatments. The stipend will begin at \$1,000 and increase to \$2,000 in the second year of the agreement;

The establishment of a City-funded cancer-screening account of \$50,000, replenished annually, to help eligible employees cover the cost of specified job-related cancer screenings; An increase to 18 sick days annually and the ability to use up to 10 sick days for an approved Family and Medical Leave Act absence to care for an immediate family member; Eight weeks of paid maternity leave for employees who give birth.

“This agreement recognizes the skill and service of our firefighters, including their growing role in emergency medical response, while providing stability for Local 76, the City, and our taxpayers,” said Mayor Wilson. “I’m grateful to everyone who came to the table in good faith and got this done.”

The agreement also updates provisions related to education, reimbursement, promotional processes, vacation use, bereavement leave, and return-to-duty training following an extended absence. The contract follows ratification by Local 76 membership and a funding vote by the Somerville City Council. The previous collective bargaining agreement expired June 30, 2026.

To view this update and more City news on the City website, visit somervillema.gov/news

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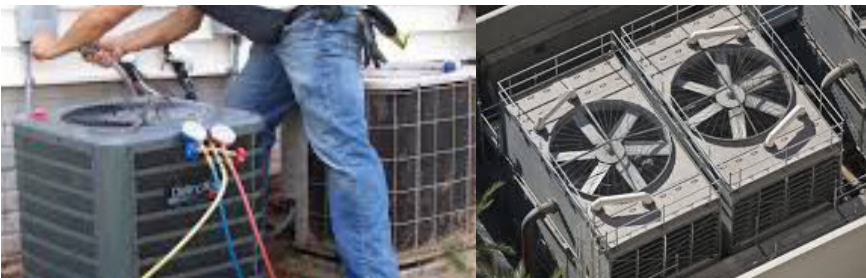
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Somerville Recreation’s Fall Festival Returns October 3

Free festival welcomes fall with bounce houses, pumpkin decorating, a magician, and more

SOMERVILLE– Fall in New England means crunchy leaves, cooler temps, pumpkin spice everything and...Somerville Rec’s annual Fall Fest. Families are invited to the free celebration of the season on Saturday, October 3, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Founders Memorial Rink (8 Garden Court).

The fall-tastic afternoon will feature bounce houses, music, a magician, pumpkin decorating, face

painting, and plenty of fall-themed fun for kids of all ages. Costumes and cozy sweaters are welcome but not required.

To learn about more programming from Somerville Recreation, be sure to sign up for the Parks and Recreation newsletter at somer-villema.gov/subscribe.

To view this update and more City news on the City website, visit somer-villema.gov/news or somer-villema.gov/calendar.



The poster for the Fall Festival 2026 is vibrant and festive, featuring pumpkins, autumn leaves, and photos of children participating in activities. The text on the poster includes: 'CITY OF SOMERVILLE'S RECREATION DEPARTMENT INVITES YOU TO OUR ANNUAL Fall Festival 2026 Saturday, October 3rd'. Below this, it lists activities: 'BOUNCE HOUSES - PUMPKIN DECORATING - MUSIC - MAGICIAN - FACE PAINTING - AND MORE!'. A table provides details: LOCATION: 'FOUNDERS MEMORIAL RINK (8 GARDEN COURT)', TIME: '1 - 4 PM', PRICE: 'FREE ALL AGES'. At the bottom, a small text block states: 'Persons with disabilities may request accommodations to access the programs, activities, and meetings of the City of Somerville by contacting the ADA Coordinator at (617) 462-3400 or ADA@somer-villema.gov in advance of the event. The City of Somerville can provide you with an interpreter in your language for free. To request an interpreter, please contact us at languageaccess@somer-villema.gov or call us at (617) 462-3400 at least 7 days in advance of this event.'

PERCENTAGE OF TIMES LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES
VOTED WITH THEIR PARTY’S LEADERSHIP IN 2026 THROUGH SEPT. 11

By Bob Katzen	party’s leadership in 2026 through September 11.	Some representatives	based on the number of	Paul Donato 100 percent
The percentage next to the representative’s name represents the percentage of times the representative supported his or her	The number in parentheses represents the number of times the representative opposed his or her party’s leadership.	voted on all 125 roll call votes. Others missed one or more roll calls. The percentage for each representative is calculated	roll calls on which he or she voted.	(0) Rep. Erika Uyterhoeven 95.1 % (6)
			Rep. Christine Barber 99.2 % (1) Rep. Mike Connolly 95.2 % (6) Rep.	

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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The sign for VFW Post 1012 features the VFW emblem on the left. To the right, the text reads: 'Steve McLaughlin Commander', 'VFW Post 1012', 'CommanderVFWPost1012@gmail.com', '114 Mystic Ave Medford, MA 02155', 'Office 781-395-2519', and 'Cell 781-572-8200'.



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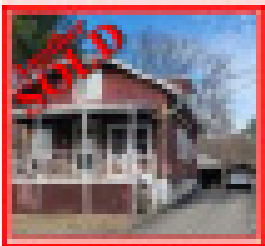
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Class Action Lawsuit Regarding Fraudulent and Inaccurate Somerville Water Bills

By William Tauro

We are looking for residents interested to being part of a class action lawsuit to help Somerville home owners, property owners, residents and tenants to obtain the justice they deserve after being victims of fraudulent and/or inaccurate outrageously high water bills caused by faulty water meters and

inaccurate readings.

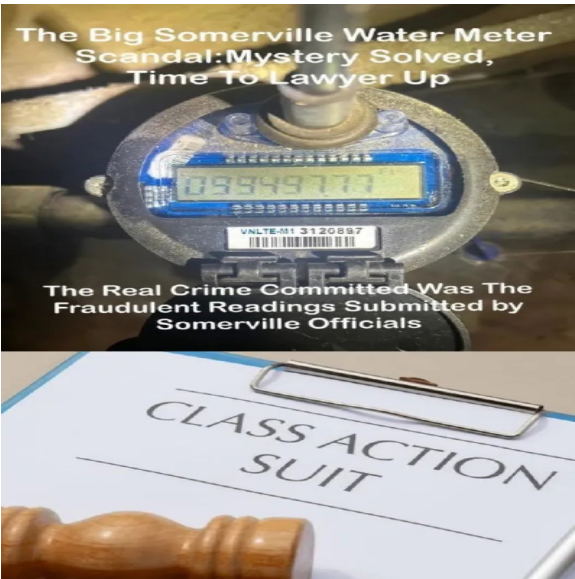
All contacts and information will remain confidential.

Send to email : Wmtauro@aol.com or
Inbox me

(Please DO NOT post any contact information in the comments area)

Please include your full name that the bill is in, your address, phone number and email address and we will contact you.

Please feel free to message me or email me at Wm-tauro@aol.com with any inquiries about joining the list of potential plaintiffs in this class action lawsuit.



Medford VFW #1012 Karaoke Night

Medford VFW #1012 located at 114 Mystic Avenue in Medford is having karaoke on 7/24 and 8/21 , 8:00 PM till 12:00 PM!

Somerville's own Scotty Lombardo will be the DJ so don't miss it!





Somerville Celebrates Latin American and Caribbean Heritage Month Saturday, September 26

All invited to free event with music, dance, and food celebrating the City's Latin American and Caribbean communities

SOMERVILLE – Somerville's Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA), with support from the City's Division of Equity and Belonging and the Somerville Community Corporation (SCC), invites all community members to celebrate Latin American and Caribbean Heritage Month on Saturday, September 26, from 2 to 5 p.m. at Somerville High School (81 Highland Ave.).

Enjoy a wide selection of Latin American and Caribbean food and refreshments, from Brazilian cheese bread to Haitian griot, alongside an afternoon of music, movement, and opportunities to join in.

Featured performers include: Sinhá Capoeira: Sharing the Afro-Brazilian tradition of movement and music. Fraternidad Folklórica Boliviana New England: Celebrating Bolivia's cultural heritage through traditional dance. Katya Macedo: The Brazilian native and Somerville local will guide participants through basic samba steps in a welcoming

environment. DJ Michael: The Haitian-born, Somerville-based DJ will keep the crowd moving throughout the afternoon.

Local advocacy organizations and community groups will also be on hand to share resources and connect with residents. Bring your family, meet your neighbors, and celebrate the cultures and communities that help make Somerville home. The event is free and open to all.

To view this update and more City news on the City website, visit somervillema.gov/news.



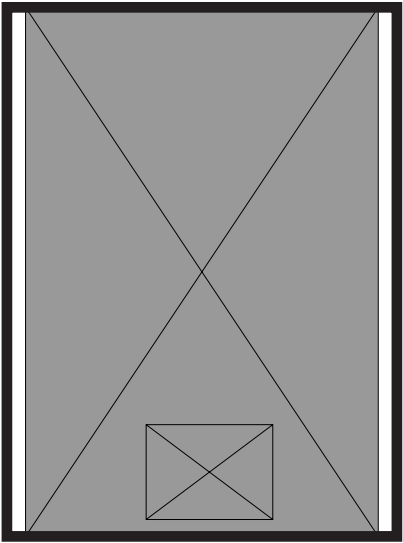
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THE \$72.80 PROJECT

By Bob Katzen

Northampton 20-year-old Vassar College student Noah Daube-Valois has launched the \$72.80 Project, a podcast series spotlighting the financial realities faced by nursing home and rest home residents surviving on a \$72.80 a month personal allowance.

Currently, the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA), the monthly stipend Medicaid (MassHealth) recipients are permitted to retain from their income, is \$72.80 to cover personal essentials

not funded by facilities.

Supporters note that In Massachusetts, one of the most expensive states in the country, the PNA has remained stagnant at \$72.80 per month (roughly \$2.40 per day) since fiscal year 2008. By contrast states such as Alaska allow up to \$200 per month, Nevada provides \$163 and Florida grants \$160.

Daube-Valois created the project after spending the summer coordinating activities for residents at Rockridge Retirement Community in Northamp-

ton. “Some of the activities I facilitate are trips to the Big Y and Walmart,” said Daube-Valois “Recently, an older resident broke down in tears explaining that on \$72.80 a month, after meeting his personal care needs, he cannot even afford to take his grandson out for ice cream like his own grandfather did for him. When our elders are forced to ration basic dignity in one of the wealthiest states in the nation, policy has failed. I created this podcast to spark a multi-generational fight for the right thing to do.”

The group Dignity Alliance Massachusetts has designated raising the PNA as one of its primary legislative priorities. Several measures, pending before the Legislature, propose increasing the monthly allowance and indexing future adjustments to inflation.

“For nearly two decades, nursing home residents on MassHealth have had their discretionary income frozen while the cost of everyday living skyrocketed,” said former Sen. Dick Moore, chair of the Legislative Workgroup for Dignity Alliance

Massachusetts. “Noah’s podcast brings human faces and lived experiences to numbers on a budget sheet. It’s past time for the Legislature to restore basic financial dignity to our most vulnerable residents.”

You can follow the podcast at <https://tinyurl.com/Project7280> and by streaming on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.



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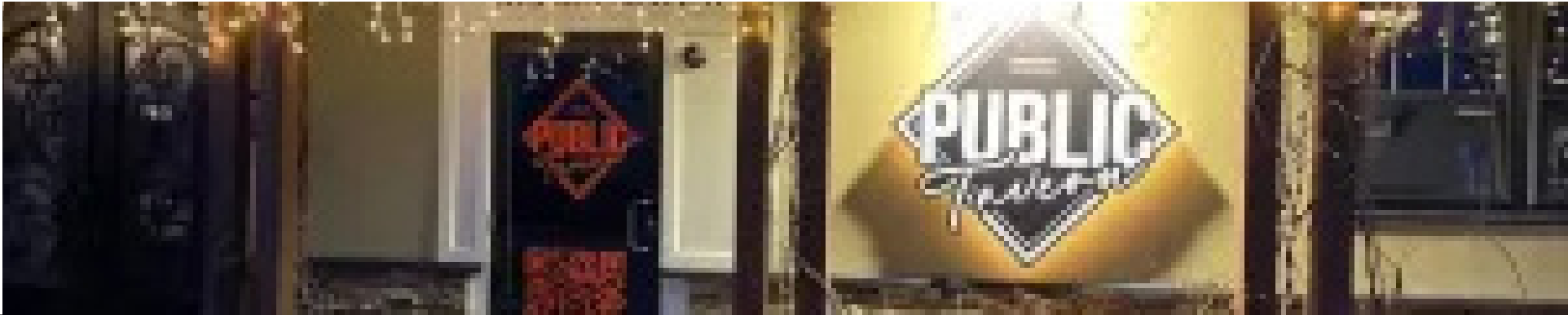
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Wilfred N. Mbah: I am resigning from the Somerville City Council

Dear Friends,

Having won the Democratic primary election to serve as State Representative for the 34th Middlesex District, I hereby irrevocably resign my position as an At-Large City Councilor, effective December 31, 2026. I look forward to continuing to serve the residents of Somerville on the City Council through the end of this year.

Under the City Charter, I understand that the

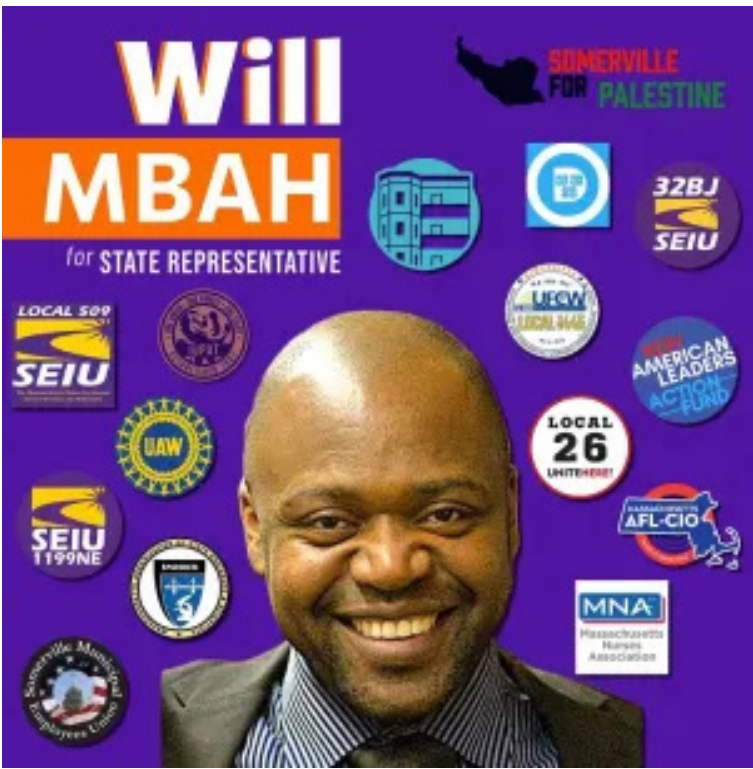
fifth-highest vote-getter in the most recent At-Large City Council election will assume the vacant seat. Accordingly, Marianne Walles will succeed me as an At-Large City Councilor.

I have known Marianne for many years and have great respect for her commitment to Somerville and its residents. I am confident that she will continue the work of serving our community thoughtfully and effectively.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served the people of Somerville on the City Council, and I look forward to continuing to work with the City and our community in my new role as State Representative.

Sincerely,

Wilfred N. Mbah.



STREAMLINE NEW HOUSING



By Bob Katzen

The Pioneer Institute issued a report that it says identifies ten straightforward permitting and administrative changes that can be initiated by cities and towns

without waiting for lawmakers on Beacon Hill to act. The report says action by cities and towns can “reduce the time and cost of building new homes, at a time when housing costs are helping drive residents to

lower-cost states.”

“We keep hearing the same story: families and employers are choosing New Hampshire, Rhode Island or states further afield because it’s simply cheaper to live and build there,” said Jim Stergios, executive director of the institute. “Municipalities can’t single-handedly fix the state’s housing shortage, but they don’t have to wait for Beacon Hill to stop making it worse. This paper gives them a concrete roadmap to clear out the friction in their own back offices.”

The suggested changes include making online permitting information clear, easily accessible and consistent with zoning; using a standardized online portal for permit application submittals; offering developers a pre-application meeting with municipal department heads and local board members; coordinating peer reviews early in the process; requiring training for local board members; and minimizing the number of local officials who hold sway over subjective criteria.

“Much of the delay and added cost in residential permitting is

invisible to the public,” said Andrew Mikula, Pioneer Institute’s Chief Housing Economist and the author of the report. “Contentious town meeting and city council votes make headlines, but there is real potential for streamlining and standardization in the back-office interactions between applicants, staff and volunteer board members that happen long before any public hearing.”

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

By Bob Katzen

The House and Senate in July approved two different versions of a primary care and health care affordability bill. The House version includes a provision that would eliminate the civil statute of limitations for childhood sexual abuse. The Senate version does not include that provision. A House-Senate conference committee is working on hammering out a compromise version of the two bills.

Under current law, effective for abuse that took place after June 26, 2014, survivors must sue within 35 years of the abuse, or within seven years of discovering that the abuse caused them psychological harm. However, the clock does not start ticking until the survivor turns 18. In

practice, that caps most claims around age 53 and leaves survivors whose window has already closed with no path back into court.

Supporters say the provision would eliminate the deadlines that currently bar many survivors from ever bringing a civil claim. They note the provisions will open a two-year window allowing survivors whose claims have already expired under current law to revive them against both perpetrators and the institutions that enabled or concealed the abuse. Moving forward, it will also allow survivors to sue individuals and institutions responsible for their abuse at any point in their lives, with no filing deadline.

Research cited by Enough Abuse shows that most

survivors take years, often decades, to come forward. More than half delay disclosure by five years or more, and the typical age at first disclosure to anyone, including a spouse, is not until the survivor’s 50s. Roughly one in five survivors never disclose their abuse at all. Male survivors tend to wait longest, often more than two decades. Enough Abuse argues that this pattern of delayed disclosure is caused by the abuse itself, through shame, fear and manipulation engineered by an abuser the child is taught to trust, and that a fixed civil deadline modeled on an ordinary accident claim misunderstands the long-lasting harm child sexual abuse causes.

“Speaker Mariano and the House took a meaningful step forward for survivors,

and we are deeply grateful for it,” said Jetta Bernier, executive director of Enough Abuse. “Survivors of childhood sexual abuse have waited long enough. The Senate now has the opportunity to stand with the House and make sure [the provision] is part of the final bill that goes to the governor this session.”

“Massachusetts is among the weakest states in the country on this issue,” said Sen. Joan Lovely (D-Salem), who pointed out that 19 states, two territories and the federal government have already eliminated the civil statute of limitations for some or all childhood sexual abuse claims, and 31 states and three territories have enacted revival windows allowing survivors with expired claims to return to court. “Many abusers and

the institutions that protect them have not had to answer for what they did. They’ve just had to wait out the clock and let the statute of limitations run out. That is exactly what this legislation is designed to stop. Survivors in Massachusetts deserve no less than what most states have already done.”





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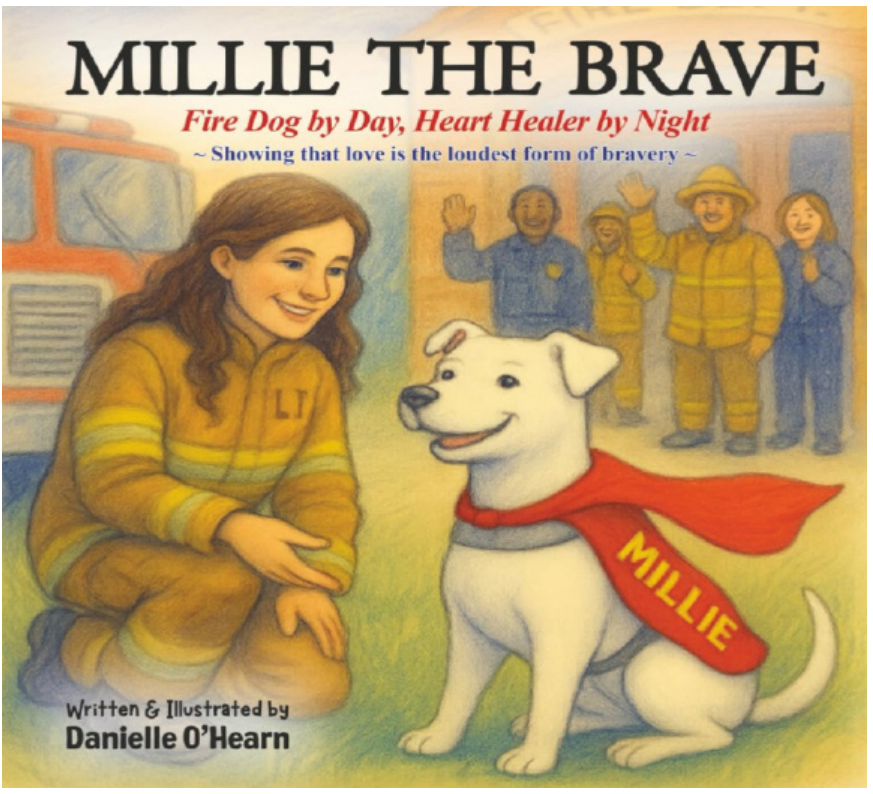
Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line,

Hey Billy
My name is Danielle we've met a few times before, I'm a firefighter in Somerville. I just came out with a children's book.

It's about my dog Millie it was a real life, first responder therapy, dog and rescue and her adventures in firefighting and being a therapy dog. I know you have a huge following. Any shout out about the book would be greatly appreciated. It's available currently on Amazon and hopefully in bookstore soon. Thanks Billy !

Here's the link the title is Millie the brave

<https://a.co/d/9cCS8Lp>

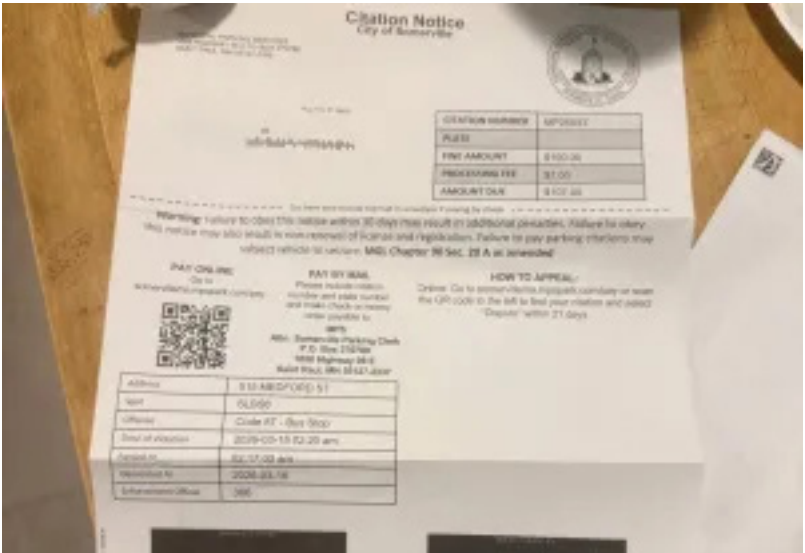


Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line: Fake Somerville Bills

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

Billy, please post this in your news paper and online. A Somerville resident received this notice in the mail.

It's almost believable with the exception of the payment address, the photo is incorrectly poised. Please warn residents to ignore this fake notice it's a scam. If you can highlight the areas that prove it's fraud



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City and Somerville Homeless Coalition Activate Emergency Fund
for Fire Victims; Call for Community Donations



SOMERVILLE– Somerville residents need your help. On Tuesday, September 8th, a fire on Dartmouth Street left four households — including multiple vulnerable

residents and their pets — without homes. Thankfully no life was lost, but most face significant hurdles to replacing their belongings, covering the cost of new or temporary housing, and rebuilding their lives. From medicine and clothes to food in the pantry, these residents are facing the difficult task of starting over.

The Somerville Homeless Coalition Emergency Dis-

placement Fund has been activated to support the fire victims. Please consider donating whatever you can to the fund — no donation is too small. Your support will provide immediate relief. Only financial donations are sought at this time. Every donation makes a difference. Thank you, Somerville, for being the kind of place where we take care of our own.

How to Donate:
Visit bit.ly/shcfund
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To view this update and more City news on the City website, visit somer-villema.gov/news



\$10 BILLION IN MARIJUANA SALES



By Bob Katzen

The Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) announced that Massachusetts marijuana establishments have exceeded

\$10 billion in all-time gross sales. The milestone comes nearly a decade after voters approved adult-use cannabis in the November 2016 election, and nearly eight years

after the November 2018 opening of the state’s first two adult-use retail stores opened in Northampton and Leicester.

“The adult-use cannabis market has grown quickly since the first retail stores opened in 2018, and now reliably generates more than \$1.5 billion in gross sales annually,” said CCC Executive Director Travis Ahern. “As the industry enters its next phase with

new license types and operators, we look forward to continuing our mission of overseeing a safe, equitable cannabis market for Massachusetts consumers and patients.”

“The licensees that comprise the adult-use industry deserve congratulations for safely growing the industry from scratch and providing a significant return to Massachusetts taxpayers through sales,

excise and local taxes along the way,” noted Commissioner Anthony Wilson. “As commissioners, we will continue the work of making sure the industry continues to grow carefully, safely and equitably.”

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Somerville Toasting What the Fluff? Festival Turning 21

Free festival celebrates 21 years of Union Square fluff-tastic with live music, local vendors, games, and fluff-focused treats

SOMERVILLE – Things are about to get sticky in Union Square as Somerville’s annual “What the Fluff?” Festival returns Saturday, September 19, from 1 to 5 p.m. (severe weather date: Sunday, September 20).

This year’s theme, “Legally Fluff: A Toast to Union Square,” celebrates the festival’s 21st year. Community members of all ages are invited to join the free festivities honoring the invention of Marshmallow Fluff and the neighborhood’s creative spirit.

“Every year, Fluff Festival arrives with so much fresh energy and joy it’s hard to believe it’s been around for 21 years,” said Mayor Jake Wilson. “That’s a credit to the local businesses, artists, volunteers, and neighbors who keep finding new ways to celebrate Union Square’s sweetest invention.”

Whether you’re a lifelong Fluffernutter fan or just here to see what a Fluff hairdo looks like, there’s plenty to explore: Head to the Shenanigans Stage for Fluff Musical Chairs, Fluff Limbo, the Fluff Hairdo Contest, and Fluff Jousting, hosted by the festival’s longtime Archibald Query impersonator. Enjoy electric performances on the Fluff ’N Jam Stage by Magnificent Danger, Camelia Latin Dance Band, Solmaría, and Dom the Composer, with emcee Estefania Ladner of Ebi Sushi. Browse more than 100 vendors offering sweet and savory Fluff-inspired dishes, art, jewelry, clothing, and more. Stop into neighborhood businesses for special treats and limited-edition Fluff goodies. Try your luck at free boardwalk-style games, including Fluff Bowling and Fluff Ring Toss, with prizes to win. For a different kind of challenge, tackle a parkour course hosted by

Parkour Generations Boston. Visit Somernova’s Innovation Alley for robots, marshmallow towers, and hands-on activities. Help paint a community masterpiece by local artist Nate Devarie, or strike a pose with colorful Fluff character cutouts. Plus, check out City first responder and DPW vehicles, tap dancing from Yellow Shed, balloon art from Confetti Friends, and demonstrations from EMBODI studios, Villari’s Martial Arts, and more.

Festivalgoers can also pick up official merchandise featuring this year’s original design by local artist Jen Gubicza.

“The remarkable growth of this community tradition reflects how much the greater Boston region loves the unexpected, its small businesses, art of all kinds, innovation, and community connection,” said Jessica Eshleman, Executive Director of Union Square Main Streets. “These are hallmarks of Somerville and Union Square, one of the region’s most unique and spirited neighborhoods.”

The celebration will recognize Angela Hsuan Chen, this year’s Mayor Joe Flufftastic Innovation for Impact Award honoree. For the past three years, Chen has helped Spanish-, Mandarin-, Taiwanese-, and English-speaking neighbors use the Union Square Farmers Market’s SNAP Match program.

Produced by Union Square Main Streets in partnership with the City of Somerville’s Arts & Culture Division, the festival will take place throughout Union Square, including Union Square Plaza, Bow Street, and Somerville Avenue from Church Street to Union Square.

Sign Up for Emergency Texts
Severe weather and other emergencies can happen. Fluff Festival attendees can sign up for day-of emergency text alerts for this year’s event: text FLUFF26 to 888777.



Getting There
This year’s festival will feature an expanded layout to give attendees more room to explore, improve pedestrian circulation, and maintain emergency access. With approximately 30,000 Fluff fans expected, attendees are strongly encouraged to walk, bike, or take public transit.

Free bike valet service from MassBike will be available at two locations on Somerville Avenue: one near Gracie’s Ice Cream and one near Market Basket. The event will be held throughout Union Square, including Union Square Plaza, Bow Street, and Somerville Avenue from Warren Street near Gracie’s Ice Cream to Church Street near Market Basket.

The following road closures, traffic modifications, and parking restrictions will be in effect:

Road Closures: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Somerville Avenue, from Church Street to Union Square
Bow Street, from Union Square to Church Street
Union Square Municipal Lot

Access Restrictions: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Vehicles on Bow Street Place will not have access to or an outlet onto Bow Street. Vehicles on Kilby Street will not have access to or an outlet onto Somerville Avenue.

Vehicular Traffic Detours: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Stone Avenue – no access from Somerville Avenue
Warren Avenue – no access to or from Bow Street
Walnut Street – no access from Bow Street
Wesley Park – no access from Bow Street
Summer Street – no access to or from Bow Street
Vinal Avenue – no access to Bow Street
Carlton Street – no access to Somerville Avenue
Hawkins Street – no access to Somerville Avenue
Webster Avenue – no access to Bow Street

Parking Restrictions: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Both sides of Somerville Avenue, from Church Street to Union Square
Both sides of Bow Street, from Union Square to Church Street
Union Square Municipal Lot

Accessible Parking: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Four additional accessible parking spaces will be available on Somerville Avenue closest to Church Street.

Temporary Two-Way Access: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Hawkins Street, between Somerville Avenue and Lake Street, may be used as a two-way street for abutter access only. Please proceed with caution.
Stone Avenue may be used as a two-way street for abutter access to Stone Avenue and Stone Place only. Please proceed with caution. Abutters to Giles Park or Hillside Park may use Walnut Street at Columbus Avenue as a two-way street for property access only. Please proceed with caution.

MBTA buses will be rerouted from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. For updated stop locations, visit MBTA.com.

For complete festival details, visit flufffestival.com. To view this update and more City news on the City website, visit somervillema.gov/news.

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Join the Somerville Zoning Board of Appeals



SOMERVILLE – The City of Somerville is seeking one new member to join the Somerville Zoning Board of

Appeals (ZBA).

What is the Zoning Board of Appeals?

The ZBA is the decision-making authority for development that requires Site Plan Approval or a Special Permit in the Neighborhood Residence, Urban Residence, Commercial Industry, Commercial Business, and Tufts University zoning districts; the ZBA is also the decision-making authority for all Hardship Variances, Comprehensive Permits, and Admin-

istrative Appeals.

Who Can Join?

All Somerville residents are invited to apply.

What is the Time Commitment?

The ZBA meets every first and third Wednesday of the month, with meetings lasting between one and two hours. Additional time for review of submitted materials may be needed, for an estimated total of 10-15 hours

per month.

What is the Appointment Process?

Members are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council.

How Do I Apply?

Applications are due by Friday, October 30, and should include a resume and letter of interest.

Where to Apply:

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

Email: zoningboard@somervillema.gov
Mail: Attn: Planning Division, 167 Holland St., Somerville, MA 02144
For questions or more information, contact zoningboard@somervillema.gov or call 311 (671-666-3311).

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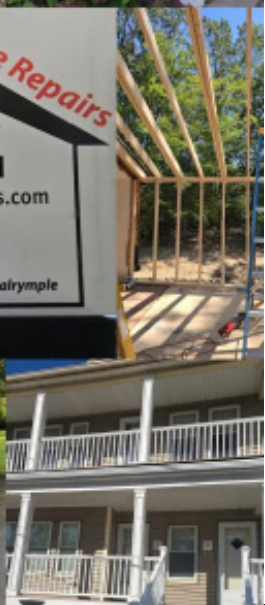


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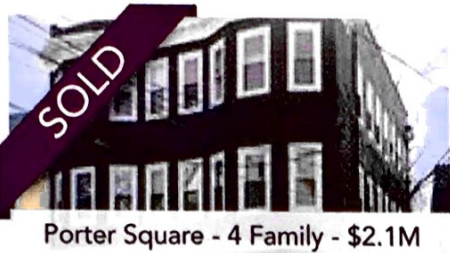


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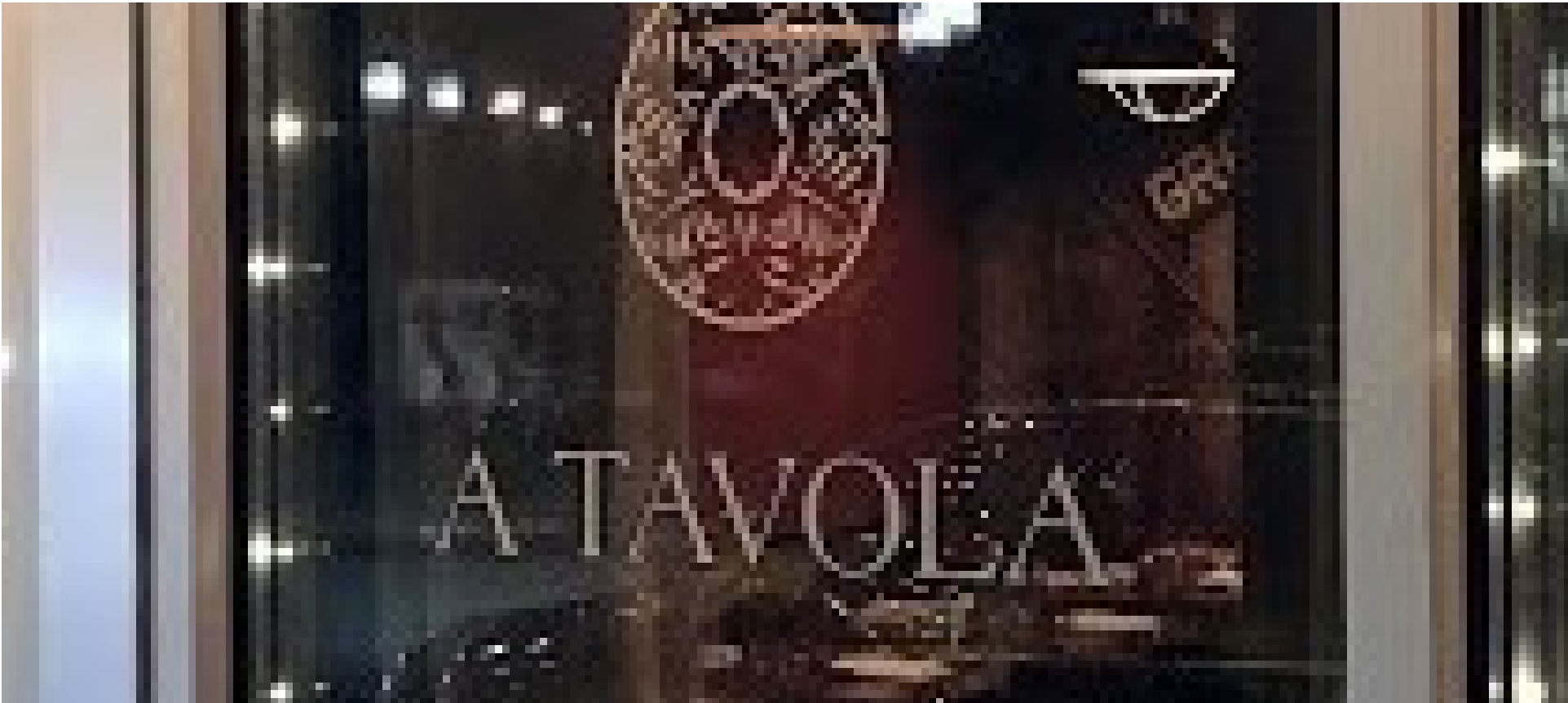
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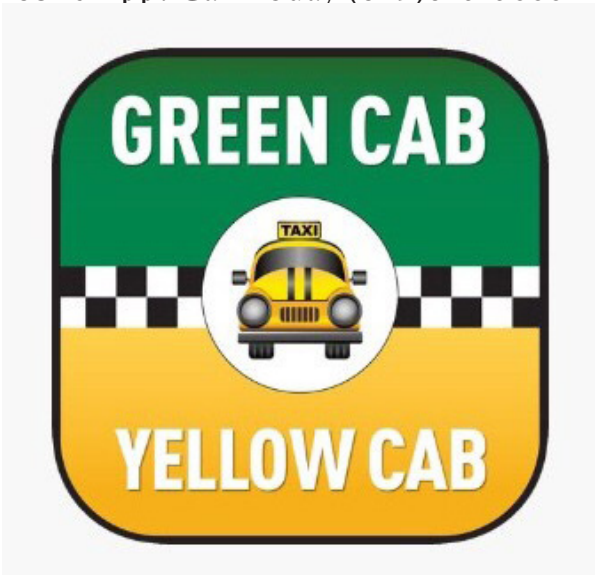


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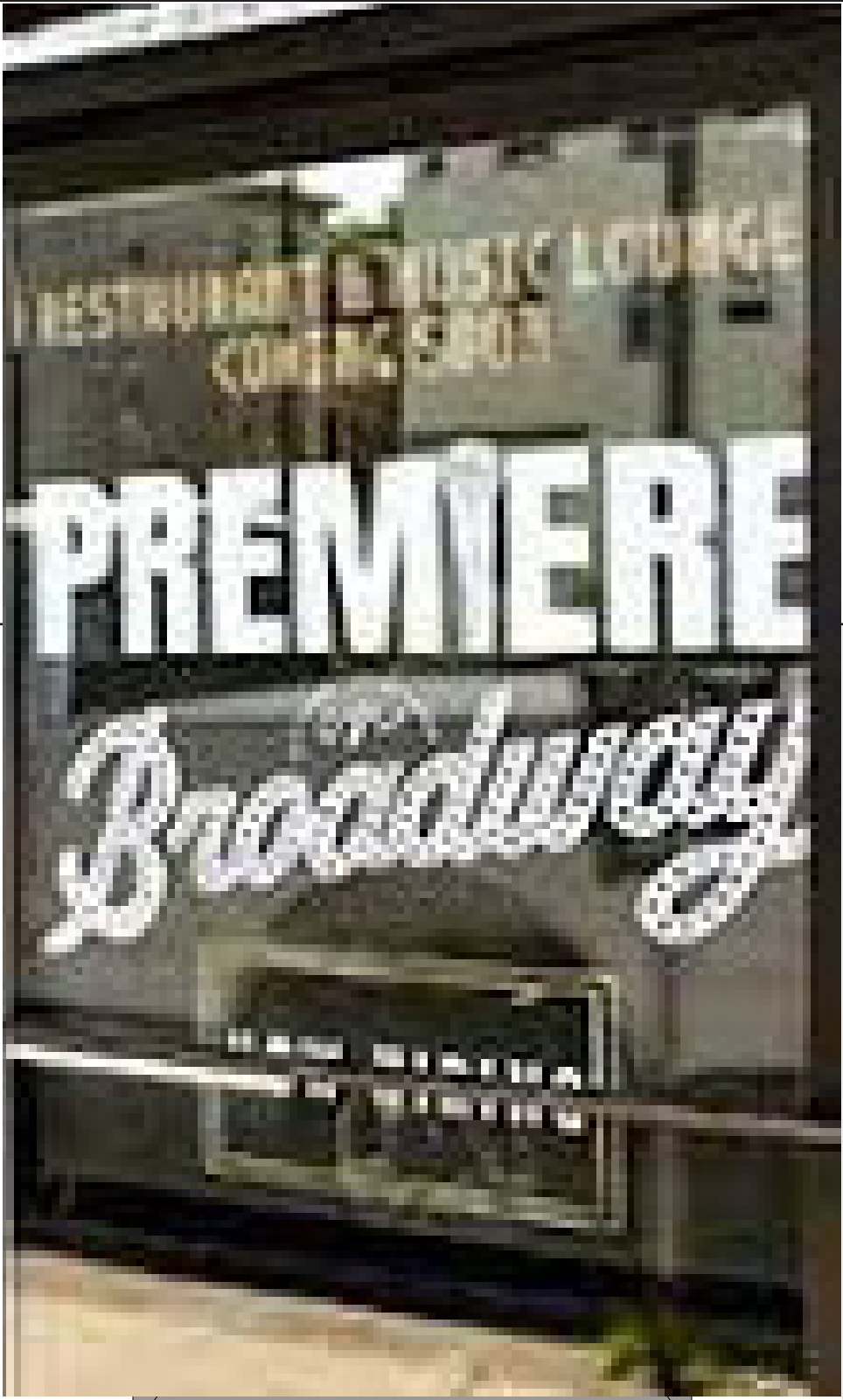
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