Packed room, packed agenda at South End Forum meeting

BY MICHELE D. MANISCALCO

After the whirlwind of holiday festivities that took up the December calendar, the South End Forum got back to business on Tuesday, January 8 at a meeting at the South End Branch Library, packed with hot-button neighborhood issues and a host of public officials present to address them.

The second-floor room at the South End Branch Library was standing-room only with residents and community activists ready for what was to come.

[Continued on page 3]

News from...

Friends of the South End Library

SUBMITTED BY MARLEEN NIERHUIS

The South End Writers, Coming Up Next:

Tuesday, February 26: From Page to Stage. Zeitgeist Stage Company, a resident theater company located at the Boston Center for the Arts, will present the world premiere of Trigger Warning, a play by playwright Jacques Lamarre on April 12 through May 4. A discussion about the play, a first for the South End Writers’ author series, will illuminate the process of preparing a script for presentation in a premiere production. It will include the reading of a scene from the play. Zeitgeist’s director, David Miller, a South End resident, has recruited several of the actors in the production to participate in the event. The playwright’s focus is on the impact of a school shooting from the perspective of the shooter’s family.

Tuesday, March 12: Does the building’s architecture in the picture remind you of the design of the South End Library? No surprise if it does, as it, too, was the product of the same architectural firm of Mitchell/Endi. [Continued on page 3]

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Local news for and about Boston’s best neighborhood

EMT Academy Graduates 19

SUBMITTED BY THE MAYOR’S OFFICE

Mayor Marty J. Walsh, together with Boston EMS today celebrated the graduation of 19 Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) recruits in a graduation ceremony at Faneuil Hall held before family, friends and colleagues. Among those addressing the graduates were Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) Executive Director Monica Valdes Lapes, JD, MPH, and Boston EMS Chief Jim Hooley. This graduating class will be assigned to 9-1-1 ambulances, strengthening the city’s emergency medical services (EMS).

In his FY19 budget, Mayor Walsh prioritized funding for 20 additional EMTs, increasing the number of budgeted full-time EMS providers from 375 to 395 for the City of Boston. The increased number of EMTs will allow for two more frontline ambulances to be staffed, including a second one in East Boston.

“Becoming an EMT is more than a career—it’s a noble commit-
**Winter Theater Offerings**

**Charlie and the Chocolate Factory the Musical**,

Roald Dahl was a kind of literary master chocolatier. The late Welsh short story writer and novelist skillfully whipped up edge narratives like "Lamb to the Slaughter" and "Matilda." So it goes with "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." Unfortunately the 2017 Broadway musical version of this popular 1964 classic lacks the delicious nastiness of its dark predecessor. Although the audience for the Opera House tour performance this critic saw gave the show a standing ovation, "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory the Musical" needs the Cowardly Lion caliber that distinguished the stage edition of "Matilda."

Admittedly there are Michel Petrucci's performances in a show featuring a David Greig book that ought to be darker—namely, Noah Weisberg as factory reopening Willy Wonka and Rufus Wainwright (at certain performances) as boisterous Charlie Bucket. Under Jack O'Brien's skillful direction, Weisberg has the right energy and vibrant singing voice befitting eccentric Wonka's on a tour, while the Leslie Briey'sinnie-white Newkyl stands out for his puppet wizardry and illusion design. Winona Bar is a singular treat, but "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" needs more unprocessed Dahl. A Doll's House, Part 2

Henrik Ibsen ignited a multigenerational-wide cultural fire when profoundly discontent Nora left her Norwegian banker husband Torvald and their children at the end of his provocative 1879 drama "A Doll's House." In 2017, American playwright Lucas Hnath daringly made his Broadway debut with "A Doll's House, Part 2"—a work controversial not the least for its striking title. While speculating on what happens to Nora after that departure, this exhilarating, though 87-minute format, non-narrative play possesses a raison d'etre much more satisfying than simply being a sequel. Indeed, the area premiere—tautly directed by Les Waters for the Huntington Theatre Company—both respects its kudos-and-predatory scribe's rich trajectory and demonstrates that Hnath himself is a writer of considerable talent.

That gratifying combination of respect and talent has clearly moved Ibsen to open his play with Nora knocking insistently on the door she slammed in leaving home—and seeking as much dialogue and understanding as possible. At the same time, the wife now writer admits that she is also looking for Torvald's actual signature, having learned that he failed to sign their divorce document. To his credit, the playwright gives fair attention to Nora and Torvald's very different points of view as well as the insights of nanny Anne Marie and her discomfort at being "in the middle" between the verbal combatants. Nora herself expresses sadness at having left her children even as she defends her needs as a woman. Revealing moments are also given to Nora grown-up daughter Emme, who has clearly been raised by Anne Marie in the absence of her mother.

Director Waters orchestrates the verbal confrontations and revelations with the nuance of a master conductor. Mary Beth Fisher has all of returning Nora's determination and drive. As a fully empowered Nora, she smartly

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**Office Hours**

Mon-Sat.
South End Forum

Continued from page 1

updates on tackling traffic safety and gridlock, the opioid crisis, the continuing off-hours, a community safety update, airplane noise and off-hours construction that has wrecked the nerves of many neighbors. Chief of police Chris Oguedo, Inspector General Services Commissioner William "Buddy" Christopher, Gina Fiume, traffic commissioner, wastewater superintendent Bruce Coughlin, and South End/Bay Village Elected Fauna Shahid, a panel of South End legislators including state representatives Aaron Michlewitz and Jon Santiago, the latter standing in for his sick father, were all in attendance.

State Senator Gluta discussed the recent passage of SB 499, which creates a South End seat on the Logan Airport Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and acknowledged state senator Sonia Chang-Diaz's support for the bill. She spoke on the necessity of increasing public transportation options in the area, highlighting the need for more frequent and reliable service to the South End.

Janyes described a recent visit to a dispensary as being "like IKEA," and said that there were three checkpoints at which customers had to present ID at the entrance, inside and at the point of purchase. The proposed dispensary at 635 Tremont Street raised logistic concerns regarding lack of parking and access for deliveries. Flynn concurred with those concerns and added that 635 Tremont is across the street from a daycare run by BBA. He said he supports the Friends of Southie Streetcar for the dispensary to be run by former Suffolk County sheriff Andrea Cabral.

"I am ready to get to work," Santiago said as he introduced his priorities and objectives, saying that the community faces a number of challenges. He noted that the opioid epidemic was on the minds of many residents. Santiago talked about medically assisted treatment (MAT), which involves the use of methadone, naltrexone and buprenorphine. Santiago said that increasing the prescribing availability of buprenorphine, which currently is prescribed to patients at practices such as the South End Community Health Center, is one of the steps that can help reduce opioid abuse.

Town Meeting Meeting

The Friends of the South End Library will meet Tuesday, February 5, 6:30 PM.

You are invited to attend the first meeting of the Friends of the South End Library Annual Meeting on Tuesday, February 5 at 6:30 PM.

You, the audience, will elect the proposed slate of officers of the South End Library (FOSEL) directors for the 2019 voting and advisory boards. FOSEL directors serve one-year terms. (The three officers: president, treasurer and clerk will start the second of their two-year terms and do not need to be re-elected.)

• We will have updates about our programs, fundraising efforts, treasury report, and the renovations for park and library. Specifically, we will have details about the library's upcoming renovations this spring to provide new carpeting, painting, furniture re-arrangement and some basic electrical work, as well as the long-term, multi-million dollar plan for a complete renovation and expansion to meet the South End's need for 21st century library services.

• And, as always, we provide delicious refreshments.

Are you interested in becoming a voting or advisory board member? Please contact FOSEL through our website. We are diverse and welcome volunteer board, united in our commitment to making South End branches and Library Park the best they can be. Some members are more active than others, and at different times, depending on their personal and professional obligations, but each has contributed to the improvement of the library.

Library

Continued from page 1

Giorgola, first headed a Philadelphia, then with a second office in New York. The architect, Renaldo Giorgola (who was the head of the Architecture Department at Columbia University) and Ehrman Mitchell, have since passed away. They designed the South End Library building in the late 1960s. The library opened in 1971. The Philadelphia office is now called MGWA Partners, Dan Kelley, MGWA's principal architect, has generously agreed to be at the South End Library to talk about the building's architectural history.

Tuesday, March 19: prize-winning author Suzanne Berne will read from her latest suspense novel, The Dogs of Littlefield. The New York Times reviewer wrote that "nothing such a reader in like psychological suspense, and Berne is a master of the genre..." Berke, who is the fiction editor of The Harvard Review, teaches creative writing at Boston College and the Raveler Writing Workshop. She won the U.K.'s Orange Award for a Crime in the Neighborhood. Earlier novels are The Ghost at the Table and A Perfect Arrangement.

Annual Members Meeting of The Friends Of The South End Library

Tuesday, February 5, 6:30 PM

The Friends of the South End Library (FOSEL) directors for 2019 were elected. FOSEL directors serve one-year terms. (The three officers: president, treasurer and clerk- will start the second of their two-year terms and do not need to be re-elected.)

• We will have updates about our programs, fundraising efforts, treasury report, and the renovations for park and library. Specifically, we will have details about the library's upcoming renovations this spring to provide new carpeting, painting, furniture re-arrangement and some basic electrical work, as well as the long-term, multi-million dollar plan for a complete renovation and expansion to meet the South End's need for 21st century library services.

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Are you interested in becoming a voting or advisory board member? Please contact FOSEL through our website. We are diverse.
News from...

**Pilot Block Neighborhood Association**

**SUMMITTED BY PNDAA**

The following is a brief summary of the January 10, 2019 public meeting concerning the request for a zoning variance by Compassionate Organics for the storefront located at 635 Tremont Street.

A public meeting was held at the AC Hotel on Albany Street in the South End, facilitated by a representative of Mayor Wahl and Mark Ross and his team. The meeting opened with updates and comments, and then the floor was opened up for comments and questions.

The turnout was huge—over 150 people attended the event. In 30 minutes of comments and questions, there were four comments in support, and over twenty-five expressions of opposition, many quite passionate.

One person, without expressing an explicit viewpoint, asked a question based on the legally required buffer zone of 1/2 mile between cannabis establishments. Ross suggested in his presentation, that this requirement would mean that if 635 Tremont were given a zoning variance, much of the South End would be protected against the existence of a medical marijuana dispensary. The questioner asked whether Compassionate Organics would withdraw its application and not seek an additional variance to the buffer zone if the proposal at 591 Albany Street was approved by the ZBA. The answer was non-committal; they would decide how to proceed in the future.

A member of the audience also seemed to draw in a huge number of people who came there organically—meaning this was an issue that lots of residents don’t necessarily get involved in local stuff compelled to attend. By the end, Ross was assuring that the number of South Enders who had voted to legalize medical marijuana were at work or otherwise too busy to show up—a theory that did not go down well with the audience.

If a goal was to send a message to the applicants and the City that abutters, near neighbors and residents that the buffer zone, overwhelming opposition to a cannabis establishment at 635 Tremont mission accomplished.

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**EMT Continued from page 1**

pose, human trafficking cases and mass casualty incidents.

"It is with deep admiration and respect that we welcome our new EMT graduates to the EMS community," said Chief of Health Hsain and Health Officer Martinez. "Each of these new recruits are answering one of the highest calls to public service so anyone in Boston can receive the quality care in their time of need. We congratulate this new class of recruits and I thank them for their service to the City of Boston."

This recruits class responded to nearly 3,000+ 911 calls during their training including emergency incident reports related to illnesses, injuries, cardiac incidents, motor vehicle accidents, childbirth, shootings, stab- bings, overdose and more. With guidance from seasoned EMT field training instructors, recruits are not only prepared to care for patients, regardless of the circumstance, they also now understand the level of care, clinical excellence and professionalism expected of Boston EMS EMTs.

"We would like to congratulate all of these new recruits for completing this rigorous training and joining our exemplary EMT core. The city faces unique challenges today and we are grateful to have been able to ensure that this class choose to serve our Boston with the highest level of care and professionalism," said Monica Valdes Lupi, Executive Director of BPHC.

As one of the largest municipal EMS providers in New England, Boston EMS responds to over 125,000 emergency medical incidents per year. As a bureau of the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), Boston EMS is committed to serving Boston’s residents through clinical excellence, emergency planning and preparedness, and community outreach.

Chief of Department, Jim Hookey stated, "Boston EMS sees great value in investing in education and professional development for our newly hired EMTs. Completion of academy is only the beginning. As a career EMS clinician, we must continue to learn and evolve along with the field of emergency medical services."

Building on Mayor Wahl’s investments in Boston EMS, the FY19 budget includes the replacement of eight ambulances, support for EMTs. This commitment by Mayor Wahl will help ensure a high level of service for all neighborhoods, and aims to have ambulances arrive on scene for Priority 1 calls within six minutes of the initial call. Additionally, the Mayor in FY18 launched the Boston EMS Community Assistance Team that uses data to change the way EMS is deployed to areas including the Boston Common and Recovery Road, improving patient outcomes and ambulance utilization. In its first year alone, the Community Assistance Team has fielded over 400 referrals for 911 calls and recovery services.

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**Theater Continued from page 2**

displays self-motivation with John Judd’s rhythmically considered Talulla, toughness with Nancey E. Carroll’s richly fizzy Anne Marie and audacity with the leadership for Nikki Mandel’s acutely resourceful Emily. Fiddler and fiddly finely calibrate Nora and Judd’s alternately volatile and sensitive truth-telling with the result some of the play’s most moving moments. Body language—particularly as characters turn away or move confusedly towards each other—is sharply enhanced by the purposefully sparse Andrew Boyle set (with Torvald having sold off Nora’s items).

Near the end of Ibsen’s luminous follow-up to Ibsen’s prescient drama, Nora voices the feeling that someday the world will be different and free. "A Doll’s House, Part 2" beautifully adds to the on-going blueprint for changing gender roles. Huntington Theatre Company’s well-choreographed premiere is a must-see residence.

Of note Small stage best list honoree ’Ripe Frenzy’ was a collaboration of Boston Center for American Performance and New Repertory Theatre. If you missed SpeakEasy Stage Company’s inspired production of the Tony Award-winning musical ‘Fun Home’ at the Calderwood Pavilion, you have a second chance June 30-Virtually the entire strong cast will return in this ‘Best of 2018’ staging.

Seth Rudetsky- who’s Huntington Theatre Company production at the Calderwood Pavilion with Chita Rivera made the special theatrical portion of this critic’s Best of 2018 list- returns June 26 at 5 and 8 p.m. in the BCVA’s Calderwood Pavilion. This time the BONE Award winner will be joined by two-time Tony Award honoree Christine Ebersole (“42nd Street” and “Grey Gardens”). This covie was wowed by Ebersole’s brilliant work as the Beales mother and daughter— in “Grey Gardens.” She recently played Elizabeth Arden with compelling intensity in the sombre but absorbing Broadway musical “War Paint,” while also featured in a tour of work from Patti LaBelle as Helena Rubenstein. Ebersole is always a must-see for her glorious voice and superb dramatics.

Our civic representatives were invited to make statements, initially. City Councillor Ed Flynn, representing the immediate abutting residents in the Ellis, Pilot Block and Villa Victoria neighborhoods, stated his firm opposition to the location, based on his conversations with many of the abutting neighbors, the obvious safety issues on Tremont St., the lack of adequate infrastructure of the location to mitigate the issues of lines of customers outside the establishment of smoke, ambulance, get away, etc. Our State Representatives, Aaron Michlewitz and Jon Santiago, expressed concerns with the location, as well. Rep. Santiago, cited the difficulty and the potential impact on vulnerable populations.

Based on comments, a leading driver of opposition is concern about traffic and parking, specifically customers double-parking and making Tremont Street even more congested with traffic and more dangerous to pedestrians trying to cross it than it already is. Neighbor after neighbor attested to how continued on page 6
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The people depicted here are helpful. Their image is being used for illustrative purposes only.

We are the future of the LGBT community.

This pilot program is a legitimate thing and there’s no reason it should not be in a neighborhood’s main business district. Perhaps the most compelling reason is from a resident living at Mass Ave and Columbus who identified himself as a patient taking medical marijuana and said a dispensary near by would make a material positive difference in his life and others similarly situated in the neighborhood.

Notwithstanding the strong feelings, with only a couple brief exceptions, people were respectful of other residents’ right to speak their minds without interruption, which was reassuring.

Next Steps:
• A Zoning Board of Appeals hearing will be scheduled in the next several months.
• Before that is scheduled, it is very important that you write letters of opposition to the list of people we’ve given you over the last year
• We cannot over-emphasize the importance of your individual voices to your civic representatives, including the Mayor.
• If you would like to write individual letters of opinion, for or against, please send a message to Joel Pimentel at 673 Tremont, below are the city contacts.
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  CITY COUNCILORS FOR DISTRICT 2
  • Email: Ed Flynn
  ED.FLYNN@BOSTON.GOV
  • Office: 617-635-3203
  • Website: https://www.boston.gov/departments/city-council/ed-flynn
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  https://www.facebook.com/EdFlynnBoston
  Mayor’s liaison to the South End and Bay Village
  • Email: Fatou Sarr
  FAISA.SHARIF@BOSTON.GOV
  Mayor Martin J. Walsh
  Email: MAYOR@BOSTON.GOV
  Regular Mail: 1 CITY HALL SQUARE, SUITE 500 BOSTON, MA 02203-2013
  For more immediate news, follow @pilotblock on Twitter
  Pilot
  Continued from page 4

Traffic safety is already a major problem and few seemed to believe that 653 could/would honor its stated intentions to prevent people from double-parking. One neighbor emphasized that the number of Uber/lyft riders would increase and would add to the congestion on the small side streets as they circled the block waiting for customers to come back out after their 5 minutes purchase.

Another woman spoke of how her greatest fear is for the world for her child is getting struck by a car while crossing Tremont Street, and a father described yanking his kid by the arm out of the path of an oblivious motorist. (Note: we have had at least three pedestrian deaths on Tremont in the past 4 years, just between W. Brookline and Union Park, alone. Tremont St. has officially been recognized as dangerous and the City is leading a redesign effort with the collaboration of SE residents.)

A number of people argued that a marijuana business is just not appropriate in a residential neighborhood, where the school is nearby and children live and go to school nearby. They noted that the zoning is for Residential/Local Services only and that Compassionate Organics would be a destination for people coming from all over the city, if they were to open in the next year.

The fact that Tremont Street is not zoned as a commercial district but a residential one was emphasized over and over. Individuals who spoke stated that there were commercial areas around the South End that did not require the same kind of zoning variance that is needed in a residential area.

The Senior Director of Youth Programs at St. Stephen’s Church on Beacon said that many neighborhood children and teens attend her program, and it has spent the last 10+ years helping these children make good life choices. She was greatly concerned about the impact of a marijuana store just a couple blocks from the program on a street where youth travel daily.

An immediate abuttee, and others, expressed extreme skepticism that Compassionate Organics could/would honor its stated commitment to make no use of the alley. A woman who resides a few doors down from 653 feared her stoop would become a trash receptacle for panhandlers for 653’s clientele, just as it already is for the liquor store next door.

In his presentation, Ross reiterated that Compassionate Organics’ plan is to open as a medical marijuana dispensary, prove itself in the neighborhood for at least six months, then seek an adult use license. Only a handful of comments touched on the recreational nature of this proposal, but one person questioned why they would wait such a short time before they applied for recreational approval. Ross answered that medical marijuana sales were already seen as a downtown, more recreational store, people with medical needs are paying for the medical registration card and are choosing to purchase their cannabis through the recreational stores, as it is less expensive. He said that in order to have viable businesses, medical marijuana stores will have to expand to recreational.

The 3-4 comments in support were largely to the effect that medical marijuana is a legitimate thing and there’s no reason it should not be in a neighborhood’s main business district. Perhaps the most compelling reason is from a resident living at Mass Ave and Columbus who identified himself as a patient taking medical marijuana and said a dispensary near by would make a material positive difference in his life and others similarly situated in the neighborhood.

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