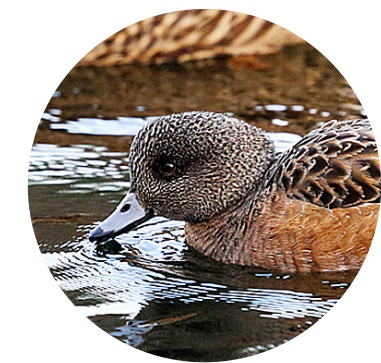




WILD THINGS

Why do the American wigeons at Cambridge’s Fresh Pond have a guilty look? They’re the outlaw of ducks, noisy land grazers willing to steal to eat.

Page 12

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THE
WEEK

APRIL
10-17,
2025

FREE | by CAMBRIDGE DAY



Marc Levy

The former AMC Loews Harvard Square 5 at 10 Church St., Cambridge.

Your storefront’s empty how long? Expect an invite

By MARC LEVY

The owner of the long-closed AMC Loews theater in Cambridge’s Harvard Square will have company as he is called by the City Council to explain his vacant space. Though billionaire Gerald Chan was the sole property owner mentioned in a policy order as it arrived Monday in front of the City Council, an amendment added the owners of the 22 other properties citywide that have been empty five years or longer. And while the intent of vice mayor Marc McGovern was to start with Chan at a single gathering of the Economic Development and University Relations Committee, by unanimous vote the committee is now looking at a series of meetings.

See OWNERS, Page 5

Two-way car traffic to one-way and back, and Garden Street now loses parking

By MARC LEVY

The traffic patterns on Garden Street in Cambridge will change again, bringing back two-way car travel for its length while keeping two-way bike lanes – which will mean eliminating more parking. The change, estimated to cost up to \$167,000 with interim changes and to be done by the summer of 2026, was approved Monday by the City Council in a 5-4 vote. Garden Street, a major thoroughfare stretching from Harvard Square to Neighborhood 9’s Danehy Park, got separated bike lanes in late October 2022 that limited car traffic to eastbound-only for five blocks between Bond Street and Huron Avenue. That moved some traffic onto side streets, leading to years of calls for correctives and even for the initial change to be undone. A Dec. 9 order from councillor Paul Toner called for that restoration, but in the lead-up to the vote, the city’s Department of Transportation presented four options last month with Toner’s being No. 4 alongside an option to keep the road as it is and two variations. In two meetings drawing hours of public comment, the fight was between keeping the current configuration and Toner’s option No. 4, which brings back two-way car traffic by taking bike lanes on opposite sides of the road and putting them side-by-side; and by eliminating parking on the stretch down past Chauncey Street, near the Harvard University police station.

See GARDEN STREET, Page 4



Michael Gutierrez

A shopper browses Sunday at Cheapo Records in Cambridge’s Central Square. It takes part in Record Store Day, coming Saturday.

How to observe great traditions: Record Store Day and musical thrift

By MICHAEL GUTIERREZ

Be bold.
Be brave.
Be frugal.

Good advice for troubled economic times is also good advice for the Cambridge Day Record Store Day Walk. If you’re one of the beautiful initiates who will be touring our local record stores on Saturday to join friends, neighbors and fellow crate diggers in celebration of the internationally recognized Record Store Day, know that you’re also exercising a particularly New England virtue: thrift. I have all the proof I need in arm’s reach with a shelf of vinyl as tall as Kristaps Porziņģis that keeps me company as I write these words. The collection is a product of decades of record hunting. It was assembled on the back of two passions. A love of music, of course. But also a great appreciation for a good bargain. How many of these albums were discovered in the \$5, \$3 and \$1 bins? Too many to count.

See ATTEND, Page 9

MEETINGS APRIL 10-17

CAMBRIDGE

Funding big projects and special-ed busing

By MARC LEVY

Homeless help, opioid funding

Human Services & Veterans Committee, 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday. This committee run by vice mayor Marc McGovern and councillor Ayesha Wilson discusses services being provided to the unhoused community and an update on opioid settlement funds (Cambridge gets \$16 million in incremental payments that began in 2022 and will continue until 2038). The committee meets at City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square. Televised and watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.

Special-ed bus transportation

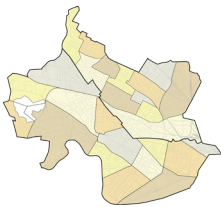
School Committee Special Education & Student Supports Subcommittee, 5 p.m. Thursday. This hearing chaired by Richard Harding Jr. discusses transportation for students with disabilities – an issue that was problematic throughout last year as electronic tracking for use by parents lacked, unlike for the buses used by other district students. Tracking devices were expected to be added in the fall. Watchable online and by Zoom videoconferencing.

Mass. Ave. of 2040 proposals

Massachusetts Avenue Planning Study community meeting, 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday. After more than a year of work – this group met for the first time Feb. 7, 2024 – recommendations will be presented for what the avenue might look like as of 2040 from Cambridge Common to Alewife Brook Parkway. At Lesley University’s Lunder Arts Center, 1801 Massachusetts Ave., Porter Square, Cambridge.

Costly programs and projects

Finance Committee, 3 to 5 p.m. Wednesday. This committee run by city councillor Patty Nolan looks at big programs and projects underway or planned for in city budgets, considering Cambridge’s current state of austerity compared with a more free-spending recent past. What else might need to be planned and incorporated into medium- and long-term capital and operating budgets will also be looked at. The committee meets at City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square. Televised and watchable by Zoom videoconferencing.



◀ **Cambridge’s City Council** meets at 5:30 p.m. Mondays from January through June and from the second Monday in September through December at City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square; televised and online.

Somerville’s School Committee meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Monday of every month September through June at Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Central Hill; televised and online. ▶

◀ **Cambridge’s School Committee** meets at 6 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday from September through June and at 5 p.m. the first Tuesday in August at the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Mid-Cambridge; televised and online.

Somerville’s City Council meets at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Central Hill; televised and online. ▶

SOMERVILLE

Schoolkids’ safety, guaranteed income

By JEFF SHWOM

Housing film screening

Somerville Public Library, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday. A Fair Housing Month screening of “Segregated by Design,” an examination of the “forgotten history of how our federal, state and local governments unconstitutionally segregated every major metropolitan area in America through law and policy.” In an event sponsored by the library, Somerville Fair Housing Commission and Department of Racial and Social Justice, the short film is followed by a conversation about fair housing and discrimination in Somerville. Registration is required, as only 20 to 40 spots are available. In the auditorium of the Somerville Public Library, 79 Highland Ave., Central Hill.

Nepali flag raising

Office of Immigrant Affairs, 12:30 p.m. Sunday. The mayor raises the flag of Nepal to wish a happy new year 2082 on a calendar founded by the emperor Vikramaditya of Ujjain after his victory over the Sakas in 56 B.C.E., which is why the calendar is 56.7 years ahead. On the concourse at Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Central Hill.

Child safety and income pilot

Equity, Gender, Seniors, Families and Vulnerable Populations Committee, 6 p.m. Wednesday. The committee discusses child safety concerns as it asks city directors to update a count of crossing guards and comment on whether four children have been hit by vehicles “on their paths to school” over the past few months. The committee also asks information about a universal basic income pilot and its future. At Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Central Hill and watchable via videoconferencing.

Codifying greener buildings

Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. April 17. A joint session with the Planning Board as the mayor and staff continue to update zoning language to include a “platinum” standard” for environmentally smart design and change wording about buildings that produce and remove the same amount of greenhouse gas (called net-zero ready). At Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave., Central Hill and watchable via videoconferencing.

THE WEEK

by CAMBRIDGE DAY

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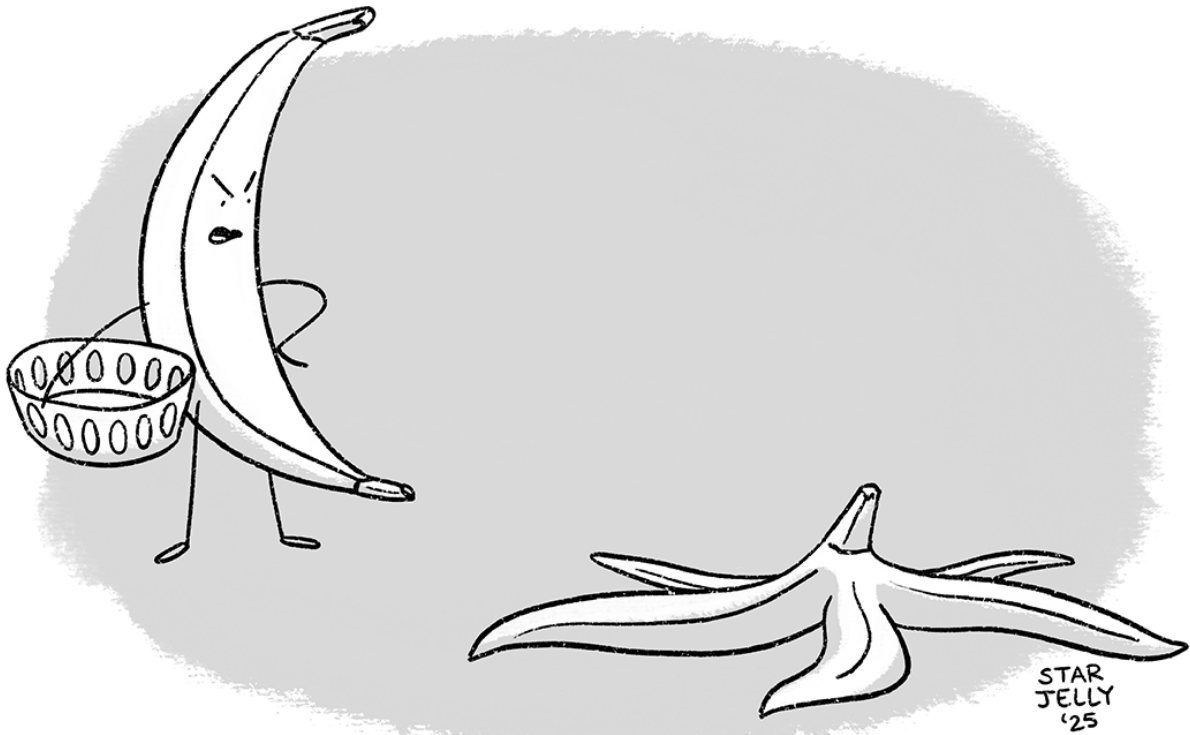
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Star Jelly Comics

See more at [instagram.com/starjellycomics/](https://www.instagram.com/starjellycomics/)



“BARRY! PICK UP YOUR LAUNDRY!”



Founders rink via social media

The Founders Memorial Skating Rink in Somerville.

Somerville youth hockey backers save the ice at Founders, for now

By JEFF SHWOM

In a win for youth hockey, the City Council voted March 27 to put a hold on the mayor’s request to install a multipurpose gym floor instead of an ice skating surface at Founders Memorial Skating Rink.

The Somerville Youth Hockey Association submitted more than 300 signatures on a petition to save the ice sheet, which was never frozen this winter. Around a dozen association supporters, including youth wearing red, white and blue hockey sweaters and holding signs, shared the podium at a council meeting and got a round of applause after the item was severed from appropriations voting.

Somerville Youth Hockey Association spokesperson Ruth Foreman lauded councilor Jake Wilson’s efforts to send the item back to the Finance Committee, which plans to bring Jill Lathan, Department of Public Works commissioner, into conversations.

“By having the DPW comment on the challenge of year-round usage, all facets – such as equitable access to recreation opportunities – can be carefully considered before any decision is reached. Our concern remains the creation of a viable and inclusive program that serves the entire community, and we welcome the opportunity to further the conversation,” Foreman said.

The mayor requested \$168,000 in public-works free cash be moved to pay for “a multipurpose recreation hub serving all ages,” citing “the community’s demand for diverse recreational activities.” The ice could return in the future, the mayor said, but this allowed expanded programming such as fitness and wellness programs, indoor sports options such as pickleball, community events and dances, after-school and summer youth programming and intergenerational programs. Founders is at 8 Garden Court, in Ward 2 between Porter and Union squares.

Somerville has two indoor ice surfaces. In the mayor’s proposal, the city keeps the adjacent Veterans Memorial Rink for indoor winter sports use and neighboring communities pick up the slack for whatever rink time is lost in taking away the ice at Founders to make it a multipurpose space.

The Winter Hill factor

From the association’s perspective, the city let a contract lapse last year with an ice contractor. When pickleball programming was effectively ended by the cold at the end of October – despite being available through November – “the city never laid down ice,” said Brenton Stewart, association president. The space was “unavailable

for ice sport usage and it was too cold to do any other sort of rec programming. So the facility has sat idle since late last fall.”

In fact, reuse of the rink arose from the city losing critical and significant space for recreation department activities because the Winter Hill school closed for safety reasons, said Denise Taylor, a city spokesperson. The rink was repurposed to test recreation uses, and freezing and unfreezing would have caused disruptions.

Either way, scheduling was complicated over the summer, Foreman said. “SYHA youth players have lost up to four hours of ice practice time during the high school hockey season which could not be rescheduled because Founders ice was unavailable. A scheduled under-age-8 hockey jambo-ree with other local hockey programs had to be canceled due to the closing of Founders ice,” Foreman said. “Furthermore, efforts to establish a Girls Middle School intramural program in partnership with Somerville Rec and Somerville Public Schools could not be piloted and implemented without access to the ice at Founders.”

Demands by the association, which has served youth aged 12 and under for more than four decades, include a modular flooring system that is placed atop an ice sheet; equitable access to ice-related recreation activities; and not moving all programs to Veterans Rink, which is used by older youth hockey teams, high school teams and adults.

Association Learn to Skate and Learn to Play programs serve around 160 participants, many under the age of 8, and the lack of space hindered expansion. “Founders Rink is perfect for our youngest members,” Foreman said. “But we were unable to utilize it this year, further cutting equal access to programming and opportunity for skill development.”

Councilors weighed in with voices of support and clarification. Lance Davis made sure to clarify that Founders is being used for non-hockey uses, such as figure skating, free skating and other community events.

Moreover, the city wants to use the space in spring, summer and fall. “Our vision is to create a vibrant recreation hub for all ages,” Parks & Recreation director Sue Yerkes said. “We want to provide consistent space for a broad range of activities, complementing the existing outdoor field and water plays areas and creating a new gathering place where people can make community connections.”

The city is looking for feedback to understand community needs for recreation and has put out a survey available in multiple languages.

School budget growth is cut in half

By DANIELLE HOWE

A \$280 million budget was adopted April 1 by the Cambridge School Committee with 5-2 votes after several months of community engagement, a focal point of this year’s process led by interim superintendent David Murphy.

The budget reflects an increase of 4.5 percent, or \$12 million, from the current budget of \$268 million, a significantly smaller jump compared with the previous year-to-year increase of 9.5 percent. A large part – \$8.4 million – represents recently negotiated collective bargaining agreements covering wages and benefits; the second-biggest item is a \$2.2 million increase to the transportation budget.

The adopted budget is set to come before the City Council at 6 p.m. May 13. The new fiscal year starts July 1, with similar modest growth expected citywide. It is a time of relative austerity for the city, which has seen its economy sag with postpandemic uncertainty around office space construction and now a hostile federal government.

Murphy elaborated on the conservative increase in the proposed budget document he presented to the School Committee in early March. “Given the financial debts attributable to the city’s large capital projects,” he said, noting new Cambridge Public Schools buildings, “and the prospect of decreasing commercial property values,” the overall 2026 budget fiscal year had to grow less “to maintain vitally necessary financial flexibility.”

The letter goes on to note that the budget has increased by 25 percent over the past five years, leaving the district “exceedingly well-positioned to serve students.”

Not everyone agreed. “We have, over the course of 20 years, doubled the amount of money that we are spending on the school system. You know, that’s a 50 percent increase



Marc Levy

A Cambridge School Committee vote April 1 passed a proposed \$280 million budget onward to the City Council.

over and above the rate of inflation, and student achievement really hasn’t budged,” said member Elizabeth Hudson, explaining her choice to vote against a spending plan for the second year in a row. “I don’t think we know what everybody is doing. I don’t think we know how we’re utilizing all of the assets that we have, and until we take that seriously, I’m going to vote no on every single budget.”

This year she was joined by Richard Harding, who took issue with the lack of substantive discussion within the committee. “We passed a more than a quarter-billion-dollar budget tonight, and we didn’t say a word about it,” he said. The vote being taken at the top of the night without discussion resulted in a resolution by himself and member Hudson being put off and met with criticism from other members.

The resolution aimed to affirm the importance of paraprofessional staffing and directed the superintendent to reallocate resources from nonstudent-facing personnel for just two more paras in the FY26 budget. The resolution also directed the superintendent to execute teacher and administrator evaluations “fully and faithfully” in hopes of adequately tracking educator effectiveness.

While member Rachel Weinstein

agreed with the premise of their efforts, she felt the timing of it set a bad precedent. Mayor E. Denise Simmons agreed, setting it aside to be addressed at a later date.

The People’s Budget

The budget process has been inclusive and long, with meetings starting in the fall of last year. The calls for increased community engagement in the budget were met, according to several public commenters who spoke before the voting, many of them members of a Solidarity Squad – a group formed in the summer that then mobilized around the closing of the Kennedy-Longfellow elementary school, creating The People’s Budget to present a draft of priorities.

“Many of us have been fighting for fully and equitably funded schools for a long time, and this budget reflects the closest any of us has gotten to having a budget that reflects community input,” said Christopher Montero, a history teacher at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School and Squad member. Still, he says, it lacks equitably distributed paraprofessionals.

Just before the vote, the Cambridge Education Association came to a long-anticipated agreement with the district on the K-Lo school closing and how staff would be reallocated. The agreement lays out plans for staff who have not yet received placements; Murphy promised at a March 26 budget workshop that K-Lo paraprofessionals would be kept on.

Despite the budget already being adopted, Hudson pointed to built-in “wiggle room” to allow for bringing on the two new paraprofessionals suggested in the resolution.

Simmons pushed back, citing the national political climate “We know we’re going to lose federal funding, and so where we can say we might have some wiggle room, I’m saying, well, let’s not play with it.”

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Hump Nights

April 12th

METRO

Police in Cambridge get \$570K for new firearms

By SUE REINERT

A \$570,000 appropriation to replace police guns and related equipment was approved March 31 in Cambridge. The vote on the controversial proposal came after a two-week delay so city councillors could have their questions answered about the purchase. Still, some questions remained after the 6-3 vote.

Some issues councillors raised did not change during three meetings when the police guns were discussed: why police wanted to replace guns that were at most seven years old, when the department says it replaces them in 10-year cycles; why officials asked to tap the city’s “free cash” reserve for unexpected needs when police had known since 2022 that its gun model was no longer being made; and why every officer needed a gun.

One sticking point was a 2020 report to the council on police department inventory saying the guns in use – the ones that will now be replaced – had been acquired that year. That would mean they were only five years old.

Yet at the March 31 meeting police commissioner Christine Elow repeatedly said the department did not buy any guns in 2020 and that the ones that will be replaced were from 2018.

Elow avoided saying the 2020 report, provided by her predecessor, Brantville G. Bard Jr., was incorrect. Instead she merely insisted the most recent gun purchase was in 2018, with language playing a role in the confusion: “The date of acquisition” of 14 guns from the fire department in 2020 was a transfer of existing equipment, not a purchase of new equipment.

“I just want to understand the discrepancy and make sure we are getting correct information,” councillor Patty Nolan. “We should fix that report and make sure it’s clear.”



Julia Levine

Cambridge police will get replacement guns after a March 31 vote.

It’s not the first time semantics have played a role in police relationships with the council. In 2020, Bard told the council his department didn’t have military equipment “at all,” then provided a list of materials showing a lot of equipment used by military forces – leading him to explain: “We do not possess materials that are restricted only to the military by law, and therefore exempted to civilian law enforcement.”

Answering concerns about police snipers in 2023, Elow said that “officers on the roof had a rifle but it was not set up or deployed ... which is why they were not snipers.”

As for why the department wanted money from “free cash,” Elow had said new weapons are urgently needed because the supply of unassigned guns is running low: only 38. Since the police

department’s Sig Sauer P320 model was no longer being made, police could not get more guns or parts if they were needed for additional officers or repairs, Elow had said.

When councillor Sumbul Siddiqui asked in a written question submitted before the council meeting why the purchase couldn’t have been planned instead of requested from free cash, given that the supply problems were known in 2022, Elow said that “until recently the department had a sufficient surplus” of guns.

The surplus dwindled “as additional training was conducted and more firearms were assigned to both full-time and special sworn officers,” she said in a written response to Siddiqui.

One clue to why: The department hires retirees to serve as special officers.

They are usually assigned to details, have the powers of sworn officers and are required to provide their own uniforms and equipment. Since 2022 special officers haven’t been able to get the P320 model from a federally licensed gun dealer in Massachusetts, as required, so the department has provided them with guns from its own inventory, Elow said.

Fourteen guns are assigned to special officers, she said.

As for why every officer, even those assigned to schools, needs a gun, Elow originally said state law requires it. After councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler said he couldn’t find any such law, Elow said she had been mistaken – it’s the city requiring that every officer be armed.

Why? Sobrinho-Wheeler asked. The commissioner said in a written answer that armed officers are necessary to ensure public safety in “tumultuous and unpredictable situations”; to keep officers safe; to respond quickly in “scenarios involving imminent danger”; and to standardize “operational readiness.”

Other issues also came up in all three meetings – the initial session when police requested the appropriation, March 17; a Finance Committee meeting March 27, when councillors were supposed to find out more; and the final meeting when councillors approved the purchase, March 31.

One selling point for the new guns was that they come with holsters that have technology to automatically turn on an officer’s body camera if he or she removes the gun from the holster. Police are beginning to outfit officers with the cameras.

In the end, mayor E. Denise Simmons, McGovern and councillors Burhan Azeem, Paul Toner, Ayesha Wilson and Cathie Zusy voted to approve the appropriation.

Read more at bit.ly/4lkP3ak.



via social media

Rumeysa Ozturk, a third-year doctoral student at Tufts, is in federal custody.

Ozturk case is continued

The federal judge hearing the case of seized Tufts grad student Rumeysa Ozturk in Vermont opted not to grant bail at a Monday hearing, instead calling for more briefs to help him decide if he has jurisdiction.

The documentation is due by 5 p.m. Thursday so the case can return to court Monday, said judge William K. Sessions III of Vermont District Court.

Judge Denise Casper of Boston had sent Ozturk’s case to Vermont in a ruling Friday – a partial win for the Ozturk after an arrest March 25 by federal agents off the street in Somerville in retaliation for a student newspaper piece.

Ozturk wanted her case to remain in Massachusetts, where her lawyers and support network are, but absolutely did not want it to go to Louisiana, where the agents sent her, the court is remote and the legal precedents are much less favorable for immigration detainees.

Ozturk was represented Monday by Ramzi Kassem of the Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility project at the City University of New York.

JOHN HAWKINSON

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CAMBRIDGE DAY & THE WEEK

Garden Street getting more upheaval and less parking

From Page 1

“I feel that by going back to two ways for traffic and maintaining a safe, separated two-way, contra-flow bike lane, we can provide a lot of what I’ve heard people ask me to try to achieve – reduce the cut-through traffic on some of the side streets,” Toner said.

Keeping the current configuration was the safest for all modes of transportation, transportation head Brooke McKenna said, affirming testimony from residents who said Garden had become a safe way for kids to bike to high school and Danehy Park – though McKenna said west-bound traffic beyond Huron Avenue near the park never got as low as her department hoped.

Beyond the loss of parking, McKenna warned, going back to two-way car traffic meant “you will have more vehicles coming.”

After a small decrease in volumes on Linnaean Street, McKenna said, by the Graham & Parks elementary school “you will see a reversal of that as people are able to come down from Massachusetts Avenue and take the right onto Garden Street again.”

The area of most concern is where Huron Avenue meets Sherman and Garden streets, McKenna said, but her department will change phasing and timing at signals to address it.

The votes in favor of option No. 4 were from Toner, Patty Nolan, Ayesha Wilson, Cathie Zusy and mayor E. Denise Simmons. Those opposed and wishing to keep Garden Street with



Marc Levy

A stretch of Garden Street in Cambridge will lose its parking spots as it returns to two-way car traffic.

its current stretch of one-way traffic were Burhan Azeem, Sumbul Siddiqui, Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler and vice mayor Marc McGovern.

“I’m going to listen to our experts. I’m going to listen to the people who have been studying this. They continue to say that option one is safer for everybody. Someone’s going to be sacrificing something at the end of the day. I’m always going to fall on the on the side of safety,” McGovern said.

The themes of public process, parking and loading zone needs, and congestion and speeding have been debated for Garden Street for the two-plus years since the change, but the most common theme Monday after the issue of safety was the fatigue felt by public officials and staff – and even residents – over the conflict.

The hopes of working with Har-

vard and using its land to squeeze some parking back into the area were shut down by city manager Yi-An Huang. “This is the best that we can do,” he said.

Calming measures have worked to some degree and “traffic patterns have settled, but they are in different places now ... Concord is a lot more busy. Garden is probably less busy. Linnaean is less busy. Making this change back will move all of that traffic again,” Huang said, “and that will make some people very relieved and appreciate the change and it will make other people very upset.” He would be reluctant to see another two-way stretch be made into a one-way because of the amount of disruption, he said.

“Bike lanes are, I have found, one of the most divisive and difficult conversations that happen in any community,” Huang said. “My first introduction to debates over bike lanes was a bit of a shock – to feel like this was the issue that was going to be so deeply emotional.”

There was yet some belief that better outreach and communication by the city would somehow avoid the bitterness that has followed bike and bus lane installations and traffic and parking changes citywide.

Wilson, noting “the divisiveness that has been created amongst the community,” asked staff to think about “the best way to have these kinds of conversations, because I don’t think we’ve got there yet. But I don’t think there’s anyone who has actually gotten there yet.”

■ Do you know of a business opening or closing in Cambridge or Somerville? Send news to business@cambridgeday.com.

BUSINESS & MONEY

A Section 8 housing waitlist closes, rents rise as federal funds dry up

By SUE REINERT

Rents could go up for 149 low-income families and individuals in Cambridge and Somerville who hold federally funded Section 8 vouchers distributed by the state’s affordable housing agency in an unusual program.

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities has also closed the waiting list for the vouchers.

The change, reported earlier by

MassLive, does not apply to two well known state-funded rent voucher programs, known as MRVP and AHVP, agency spokesperson Kevin Connor said. It also doesn’t affect federal rent vouchers provided by local housing authorities: the Cambridge Housing Authority and Somerville Housing Authority. Connor said there are 113 households affected in Cambridge and 36 in Somerville.

The executive office is changing the

way it calculates voucher holders’ rents by removing “added benefits” that could reduce tenants’ rent, Connor said. The move came because of increasing rents and “a lack of expectation for increased federal funding,” he said.

Higher market rents raise the cost for such agencies because each pays a landlord the difference between 30 percent of a recipient’s income and the market rent.

The executive office acted to lower

costs because it wanted to preserve the overall federally funded rent subsidy program, which serves 23,000 tenants statewide, Connor said.

The benefits that will end are: paying security deposits; deducting the first \$5,000 of income from work to help residents meet the Section 8 income cutoff and lower ongoing rent calculations; and paying utility allowances for cooking and hot water. Not all tenants used the benefits – and the allowance

and deduction were intended to be temporary, Connor said. The changes will take effect no later than May 1.

The Section 8 program is unusual in that the executive office, a state agency, acts as a housing authority in distributing federal vouchers. The executive office also had special status to deviate from federal rules to establish the benefits. It is returning to regulations imposed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Connor said.

Owners of longest-empty commercial properties will be called in with theater owner

From Page 1

“You can’t go through 23 potential vacant buildings in a two-hour session,” McGovern said.

Now Chan can expect to be joined by the owners of the former Evergood Market, empty for 8.7 years between Harvard and Porter squares; the Roach’s Sporting Goods space, more empty than filled for the past 12.8 years near Porter Square in North Cambridge; and several unused office spaces along Massachusetts Avenue from Harvard Square to Central Square, among those mentioned by councillors who didn’t want to see Chan singled out.

“It would be good to understand what the goals and intentions are of property owners that are leaving their spaces vacant,” said councillor Cathie Zusy, expressing regret for missing the March 11 committee meeting that went through some of those reasons and inspired McGovern’s order.

But councillor Paul Toner, who chaired that meeting, also wanted to “hear from all of them,” he said of the owners of long-term vacancies. It was his amendment that broadened the focus from Chan after he saw “a lot of angry comments in the emails received about Mr. Chan personally.”



The former AMC Loews Harvard Square 5 at 10 Church St., Cambridge.

The goal was not to attack Chan, but to understand what the issues are and maybe even how the city might help get a development on track for the building’s 100th anniversary. Before the AMC Loews Harvard Square 5 at 10 Church St. closed July 8, 2012 – Chan bought it in 2015 for \$17.5 million – the space had hosted not just first-run films and weekend showings of the cult classic “Rocky Horror Pic-

ture Show” but magic shows, vaudeville and concerts from Bob Dylan to David Bowie to the Clash.

“This is not a great time for for construction. Are there things that we can do to be a partner and to help renovate a building that is extremely, extremely important not just to the vitality of Harvard Square, but so many people who care about it?” McGovern said. “It’s an extremely large building

that has been vacant for over 10 years, that sits in the heart of one of the busiest commercial districts and most important commercial districts in our city. So the impact of that building being vacant is a lot more significant than some of the other vacant buildings in the city.”

Whispers of plans for redevelopment have come and gone over the years, but there’s been no public action since a June 2019 test of an office-building concept – a six-story video-screen facade that had fans and foes.

McGovern is also not the first person hoping they could help the billionaire reopen something at 10 Church St. and give the Harvard Square neighborhood a boost.

Denise Jillson, executive director of the Harvard Square Business Association, said she has reached out to work with Chan to improve “this once-thriving, now desolate and ignored section of Church Street.”

Ivy Moylan, executive director of The Brattle Theatre, an iconic repertory cinema just a few blocks away, said she and her partners reached out too. “Over the years, we at The Brattle have tried multiple times to speak with Gerald Chan about opportunities to bring back the cinema, seeing the opportunity this space could provide for the

Cambridge cultural landscape,” Moylan said. “We have never been able to have substantive communication with any of Mr. Chan’s representatives.”

Councillor Sumbul Siddiqui said that she reached out in 2022, when she was mayor. “We wrote a letter to Mr. Chan asking him to meet so that the city could talk about 10 Church St. and talk about this ecosystem and the impact,” Siddiqui said. “We basically said we’d love to meet with you and talk about how the city can be helpful, right? We want to partner. This is something that affecting everyone.”

There are 109 ground-level storefront vacancies in Cambridge as of November, a doubling of that figure over the past five years, according to the city’s Economic Opportunity and Development department.

“The vibrancy of our squares are really dependent upon businesses being there that people want to patronize. When we have so many closed spaces, it does bring down that that level of vibrancy,” said councillor Ayesha Wilson, who will be chairing the Economic Development and University Relations Committee meetings with Chan and other property owners. “We hope that Mr. Chan sees a responsibility to engage with us.”

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#1

EVENTS AHEAD APRIL 10-17

Somerville Theatre / Crystal Ballroom, 55 Davis Square

7:30 p.m. April 10

Kyle Gordon: Live Musical Comedy Tour

\$36.50. A New York comedian, actor, musician and viral creator, known for the parody “Planet of the Bass.”

3 to 4:10 p.m. April 12

Strange Animations with Aesop’s Sound Fables performance

\$15. The Brooklyn, New York, musical group performs alongside screenings of early animated silent films, including “Steamboat Willie,” “The Caveman’s Revenge” and “Gertie the Dinosaur.” This event features singer and guitarist Mike Nowotarski.

8 p.m. April 12

Throb Zombie and Sangria present “Gash: Haunted Sausage Factory”

\$30. This horror convention includes a haunted house, drag kings and a film screening of “Re-Animator.”

9 p.m. April 13

Trap Burlesque: “Th3 Boy Is Mine” performs

\$60, and 18-plus. In its second season, the group upgrades, trading in the stage for the full ballroom.

7:30 p.m. April 16-19

“Wonderful & Strange: A Tribute to David Lynch” series

\$15 to \$19. The tribute kicks off with a screening of a newly rediscovered 70mm print of “Dune.” On Thursday, it’s “Mulholland Drive” and the celebrated eighth episode of “Twin Peaks: The Return.”

6 to 9 p.m. April 11

Little Crepe Café, 102 Oxford St., Baldwin near the Somerville border, Cambridge

MA250 Event: National Poetry Month

Free. The event welcomes poetry readings about Cambridge milestones, innovations and firsts.

6 to 8 p.m. April 14

Porter Square Books, 1815 Massachusetts Ave., Porter Square, Cambridge

Music night at the bookstore with ’80s and ’90s hip-hop

Free, but register. The store flexes its new sound system and encourages singing-alongside.

5:30 to 7 p.m. April 15 (and biweekly through April 23)

Center for the Study of World Religions, 42 Francis Ave., Baldwin near the Somerville border, Cambridge

Magic spells with the “Thinking with Plants and Fungi” reading group

Free, but register. Historian Christina Oakley Harrington of “The Treadwell’s Book of Plant Magic” joins with research from more than 200 sources that saw magical powers in plants that could achieve love, win competitions, become invisible and so on.

11:30 a.m. April 11-13

Massachusetts Hall, 11 Harvard Yard, Harvard Square, Cambridge

Food 4 Thought Festival

Free to \$150. The second annual gathering highlights student work in creating a sustainable, equitable, healthy and cruelty-free future of food. Keynote speakers include Farm Sanctuary’s Gene Baur and the Good Food Institute’s Bruce Friedrich.

6 to 9 p.m. April 10

Lovestruck Books, 44 Brattle St., Harvard Square, Cambridge

“The Great Gatsby” centennial celebration

\$28.50 to \$82. This celebration invites attendees back in time to the glitz and glamour of the Roaring ’20s (through a tragic novel about class, grasping desperation and avarice, betrayal and rejection). Music and drink will be era appropriate, a fortune teller will be on hand and there’s a dress code to make a trip to the photo booth more memorable.

Noon to 2 p.m. April 12

Cambridge Art Association’s Kathryn Schultz Gallery, 25 Lowell St., West Cambridge

“Mend/Amend” workshop

\$10 to \$15. Fabric artist Winnie van Der Rijn leads participants in mending a tattered American flag.

6 to 8 p.m. April 17

Harvard Art Museums, 32 Quincy St., near Harvard Square, Cambridge

Intercollegiate poetry showcase

Free, but register. The annual showcase recognizes young poets at Greater Boston colleges. Professors nominate the students who read their original work.

7 p.m. April 14

Harvard Book Store, 1256 Massachusetts Ave., Harvard Square, Cambridge

Daniel Mendelsohn reads his translation of “The Odyssey”

Free. Bard College’s Mendelsohn has drawn praise and packed houses for his “thrilling,” “rich and rhythmical,” “superb,” “mesmerizing” work (critics say) just as a theatrical version of Homer’s epic leaves the Cambridge stage and Christopher Nolan prepares to bring the story to the big screen.

8 p.m. April 11-May 4

Arrow Street Arts, 2 Arrow St., Harvard Square, Cambridge

Moonbox Production presents “Crowns” opening night

\$55. Using rap and gospel music and dance, the musical explores the rich and fashionable hats worn throughout Black history. The show is an adaptation of Michael Cunningham and Craig Marberry’s book by the same name.

8 to 9:30 p.m. April 12-13

Julie Ince Thompson Theatre, The Dance Complex, 536 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square, Cambridge

Valkyrie Heels Crew presents “Ignite”

\$29. The queer-led group presents a showcase of movement, storytelling and dance – much of it in heels, but with guest performances in other dance styles.

1 to 5 p.m. April 12

Mass Audubon Nature Center at Magazine Beach, 668 Memorial Drive, Cambridgeport

“Nature in the City” Earth Day Festival

Free. The festival includes art, games, food, community partners and music from the multi-ethnic fusion band Saklamara.

■ List your cultural happenings at events@cambridgeday.com.

Go to bit.ly/3XcsfzY to see the calendars day by day

Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Ave., Spring Hill, Somerville

7:30 to 10 p.m. April 11

Bruce McCulloch: Tales of Bravery and Stupidity

\$44 to \$54. The “Kids in the Hall” comedian performs his autobiographical one-person show.

4:30 to 11 p.m. April 12

“Stress Builds Character: A Fashion Show and Market”

Free to \$15. The show by Untitled Boston gathers local fashion designers, musicians and vendors and pairs designers with musicians.

5:45 to 9:30 p.m. April 16

Join a one-day choir

Free. All ability levels can join for Gaia Collective singing games, community and the chance to learn a full musical piece – becoming part of a choir for a day.

7 to 8 p.m. April 10

Aeronaut Brewing, 14 Tyler St., near Union Square, Somerville

“A Revolution on Tap: Tavern Culture and the Road through Somerville to Lexington”

\$15. Drink the same ales and ciders of the 1775 revolutionary Bostonians and learn about tavern culture’s relevance to the American Revolution.

8 p.m. to midnight April 12

Remnant Brewing, 2 Bow Market Way, Union Square, Somerville

“Abba: A dance party”

Free, and 21-plus. The event celebrates the Swedish pop band with music, drinks and dancing. Attendees with particularly inspired outfits can enter the costume content early in the evening. The winner gets a \$100 gift card to Lexie Butterfly Vintage.

★ All day April 12
Various locations

Cambridge Day Record Store Day Walk

Build your own walk and discover specially marked issues of Cambridge Week at participating locations, including Planet Records, vinyl index., Cheapo Records and Big Day Records. Redeem the issues at the Cambridge Community Center (5 Callender St., Riverside) for discounted admission to the show, featuring Jade Dust (PDX), Pushback, P.V. and Homeworld. Doors open at 5 p.m.

The Cantab Underground, 738 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square, Cambridge

8 p.m. April 10

“Haunted Vaudeville & Hellacious Horns” performance

\$15. New York City’s Charming Disaster plays its latest single “Trick of the Light,” a characteristically dark and macabre song inspired by Dracula from a duo performs songs about death, crime and the occult with ukulele, guitar and foot percussion. Boston’s Velvet Dirtmunchers (cabaret, jazz and brass with horns and accordion) and Philadelphia’s Roof (brass, loops and effects) round out the bill.

8 p.m. April 15

Dirty Pop Party

\$12, and 21-plus. Local indie pop musicians such as J-LINE, Kirsten Kirk, Emily Solar and Aisha Luzia perform.

The Museum of Science, 1 Science Park, Boston, on the Cambridge border

7 p.m. April 10

AI in health care

\$20. Rich person Arianna Huffington promotes an artificial intelligence “health coach” and MIT’s Regina Barzilay says she has an astonishingly accurate algorithm that can predict breast cancer.

10 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 13
500 Kendall St., Kendall Square, Cambridge

RACE Cancer Foundation presents Super Sunday 2025

Free. The 18th edition of the event begins with a 5-mile or 5K race. When the race ends, the party begins at the Kendall Square beer garden with food trucks and

6 to 9 p.m. April 10

MIT Museum, 314 Main St., Kendall Square, Cambridge

After Dark Series: Oceans

\$10 to \$20, and 21-plus. Explore the deep sea with a display of photographs from artist Keith Ellenbogen, a talk about how scientists search for oceans and life in other solar systems with MIT’s Julien De Wit, and other activities. Snacks from Page and local beer from Small Change Brewing Company are available to buy.

5:30 to 7 p.m. April 16

MIT’s Stephen A Schwarzman College of Computing, 51 Vassar St., Area II, Cambridge

“The U.S. and the World Under Trump: The First 100 Days” forum

Free. Harvard University’s Juliette Kayyem and the American Enterprise Institute’s Kori Schake break down the first 100 days of president Donald Trump’s second term and analyze the national and global implications.

7:30 p.m. April 3-20

Central Square Theater, 450 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square, Cambridge

“Her Portmanteau” theater

\$27 to \$103. A drama of family and forgiveness by Nigerian-American storyteller, actor and educator Mfoniso Udofia. It focuses on a Nigerian mother in the United States and her two daughters, whose reunion forces them to confront their past and navigate cultural differences.

6 to 8 p.m. April 14

Cambridge Community Television, 438 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square

CCTV’s Cinema Club: “Think Book Club, But for Movies!”

Free, but register. CCTV welcomes cinephiles, filmmakers and other video enthusiasts to scrutinize one film each session. This first class begins with a short film screening and discussion.

5:30 to 7:30 p.m. April 10

65 Franklin St., Central Square, Cambridge

Tutoring Plus Anniversary Gala

Free, but donations accepted. This Cambridge nonprofit has matched thousands of Cambridge kids with one-to-one tutors for free for 61 years. Its annual party – with food from Bar Enza and an open bar – aims to raise \$70,000 as it did last year (the website shows \$37,000 is still needed, with a button to donate). This year honors Bobby Tynes, principal at Fletcher Maynard Academy.

FILM AHEAD APRIL 10-17

LOCAL FOCUS



John Hurt in “The Elephant Man,” directed by David Lynch.

Wicked Queer festival; overseas treats; new 4K via ‘Cinema Her Way’

By OSCAR GOFF

Wicked Queer, New England’s oldest and most beloved LGBTQ+ film festival, continues this week with screenings at venues spanning metro Boston, including no fewer than 10 screenings at **The Brattle Theatre**. Highlights of the back half of the fest include the U.S. premiere of Patricia Ryczko’s sci-fi parable “Reset” on Friday, the horror comedy “**The Brooklyn Butcher**” on Saturday and the Festival Spotlight screening of Elena Oxman’s “**Outerlands**” on Sunday.

Viewers looking for the full eclectic festival experience, meanwhile, might seek out four wildly different programs of shorts: “**Beyond Kinsmen: Men Searching for Love, Understanding and Revenge**,” on Thursday; comedy spotlight “**Laugh, Cry and Embrace the Chaos**” on Saturday; “**Uncharted Desires**,” a program of women’s shorts, on Sunday; and Sunday’s festival closer “**WQ:41 GTFO**,” featuring the fest’s wildest and most unclassifiable short subjects. The diversity on display is a welcome reminder of the vast and vibrant world of queer art that, despite the best efforts of the current powers that be, will never be silenced.

Game, as they say, recognizes game, and this week the **Harvard Film Archive** kicks off its tribute to the 50th anniversary of one of the world’s other great troves of cinematic treasures: Japan’s **Kobe Planet Film Archives**, home to more than 20,000 priceless film prints and countless related artifacts. The series, “**Planet at 50**,” begins Friday with a program titled “**Prewar and Wartime Animation**,” collecting some of the earliest extant examples of Japanese animation, all projected on film with live musical accompaniment by Robert Humphreville. That’s followed by “**To All the J**ps: South Korean A-Bomb Survivors Speak Out**” (1971), a harrowing and rarely screened documentary by the Nihon Documentarist Union.

Saturday, meanwhile, brings Igayama Masamitsu’s fascinating quasi-documentary “**The Sea Demon on Land**” (1950), which follows a real octopus as it escapes from a fish market and crawls its way back to the sea.

The series continues into May. (Also don’t miss the HFA’s ongoing “**Yugoslav Junction**” series, which returns Sunday with a new documenta-

ry: Matevž Jerman and Jurij Meden’s “**Alpe-Adria Underground!**” (2024), delving into an archive of nearly 200 recently restored experimental independent films from Soviet-era Yugoslavia.)

The tributes to the late and sorely missed **David Lynch** continue this week, with screenings at no fewer than three local cinemas. First up, the Brattle has a new 4K restoration of Lynch’s sophomore feature, “**The Elephant Man**” (1980), screening from Sunday through Tuesday. A work-for-hire biopic of renowned Victorian sideshow performer Joseph Merrick, “Elephant Man” might seem slightly atypical of Lynch’s work from today’s vantage, but it is a fine showcase for the filmmaker’s striking visuals and deeply felt humanity, and proved to the world he had more in him than the outré expressionism of “Eraserhead.” On Tuesday, the **Landmark Kendall Square Cinema** continues its month-long spotlight on Lynch with his 1985 arthouse breakout “**Blue Velvet**.” On Wednesday, the **Somerville Theatre** kicks off its own Lynch tribute, “**Wonderful and Strange**,” with a pristine, newly discovered 70 mm print of the 1984 “**Dune**.” These films are about as different as three works from a single director can be.

On Wednesday, The Brattle welcomes writer and film critic Marya E. Gates for screenings inspired by her new book, “**Cinema Her Way**,” a collection of interviews with 19 world-class female filmmakers (featuring illustrations by Brattle technical director Alex Kittle!). Gates will be on hand to introduce beautiful 4K restorations of two of the book’s subjects: Gina Prince-Bythewood’s beloved indie rom-com “**Love & Basketball**” (2000) and Lizzie Borden’s pioneering sex worker drama “**Working Girls**” (1987). Next Thursday, Gates hosts two seminal films by director Bette Gordon, “**Variety**” (1983) and “**Luminous Motion**” (2000), followed by a discussion with Gordon herself. Copies of “Cinema Her Way” will be available.

Oscar Goff is a writer and film critic based in Somerville. He is film editor and senior critic for the Boston Hassle, and a member of the Boston Society of Film Critics, Boston Online Film Critics Association and the Online Film Critics Society.

Cambridge-Somerville is a film mecca, with a half-dozen sites with a total 36 screens open daily:

The Brattle Theatre, 40 Brattle St., Harvard Square, Cambridge. Founded in 1953 and a nonprofit since 2001. One 250-seat theater with 7.1 surround sound and 35 mm capabilities with a specialty in themed repertory programs and classic, cutting-edge, foreign and art-house films as well as some first-runs and new releases of classics. **(617) 876-6837 and brattlefilm.org**

Harvard Film Archive at The Carpenter Center, 24 Quincy St., Harvard Square, Cambridge. Founded in 1979 at Harvard University. One 188-seat theater with DCP, 35mm, 16mm and Super 8 capabilities and a repertory archive of more than 40,000 pieces of cinema history from around the world. **(617) 495-7578 and harvardfilmarchive.org**

Somerville Theatre, 55 Davis Square. Founded in 1914. Three screens with 1,566 seats, including one with Dolby Digital Sound and 24 surround speakers and 70mm capabilities for a mix of first-run and repertory fare and classics. **(617) 625-5700 and somervilletheatre.com**

Landmark Kendall Square Cinema, 355 Binney St., Cambridge. Opened in 1995. Nine screens with 682 seats with DLP digital projection and sound showcasing independent film, foreign-language cinema, restored classics and documentaries with some first-run and even blockbuster films mixed in. **(617) 621-1202**

Apple Cinemas Cambridge, 168 Alewife Brook Parkway, Cambridge Highlands near Alewife and Fresh Pond. First opened in 1965, reopened in 1990 with 10 screens. A specialty in screening South Asian cinema along with first-run films. **(617) 229-6555**

AMC Assembly Row 12, 395 Artisan Way, Assembly Square, Somerville. Opened in 2014 with a dozen screens for first-run films with IMAX capabilities and Dolby sound. **(617) 440-4192**

FILM CLIPS



Michael Fassbender and Cate Blanchett.

‘Black Bag’: Soderbergh style

By TOM MEEK

The latest from prolific filmmaker Stephen Soderbergh (“Ocean’s Eleven,” “Traffic”) is a sharp, thoughtful spy thriller in the neighborhood of “Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy” (2011), if updated for these high-tech times and tossed on a treadmill. There’s plenty of cloak and dagger, but the story’s center is the relationships between husbands, wives and lovers. “Black Bag” comes in at about 90 minutes, matching the paranormal psycho-thriller “Presence” released this year by Soderbergh. Who drops two utterly different films within weeks of each other? Both were written by “Jurassic Park” (1993) scribe David Koepp, who outdoes himself here, and both were shot in limited locations, though “Black Bag” has a bigger, world-hopping feel to it. The London-set work and contrasting light-dark framings brought together warmly by a deep, bass-driven jazz score impress in craftsmanship and seamless ease. At the epicenter of the smoldering espionage are British operatives George (Michael Fassbender) and his wife Kathryn (Cate Blanchett). George has been alerted to a mole at the agency and tasked to find them in just a week. On the list among five possible double dealers: his wife. The others are grizzled party-boy Freddie (Tom Burke), his latest office fling and X factor Clarissa (Marisa Abela), the hunky yet generic Col. Stokes (Regé-Jean Page of “Bridgerton”) and the agency’s resident psych, Zoe (Naomie Harris). The chemistry between Fassbender and Blanchett is intellectually and erotically electric, and George and Kathryn have a fashion sense to die for. The casting and lean script by Koepp make the film work, as well as Soderbergh’s edit.

At Kendall Square.



Jenna Ortega in “Death of a Unicorn.”

‘Death of a Unicorn’: Hit and run

By OSCAR GOFF

“Death of a Unicorn” doesn’t waste time getting to the main event. Meek attorney Elliot (Paul Rudd) and sullen daughter Ridley (Jenna Ortega) are en route to the estate of Elliot’s employer, ailing pharmaceutical magnate Odell Leopold (Richard E. Grant), and his family (Téa Leoni and Will Poulter). Speeding down the winding, mountainous road, Elliot accidentally hits a mysterious animal with his car; hesitant to use the U-word, he describes it as “horse-shaped ... with a, uh, protuberance of some kind.” Upon bringing it to the compound, the Leopolds discover that the unicorn’s blood (which looks like a cross between grape jelly and motor oil) possesses miraculous healing properties, and soon find themselves thinking in dollar signs. Unfortunately, where there’s a baby unicorn, there are parents, and soon our hapless heroes find themselves under siege by some very angry, very powerful, equine beasts. As a creature feature, “Unicorn” is no great shakes. The title creatures are realized via janky CGI when, in a film such as this, even a subpar animatronic creation would be far more satisfying. Within its monster-movie framework, however, lies a surprisingly biting satire of the 1 percent. (Unfortunately, Ortega and Rudd appear to be in a different and worse movie.) Its comic high points and the strength of its ensemble place “Unicorn” a cut above the average blockbuster, but the perfect balance of action and comedy remains as elusive as its titular beastie.

At Fresh Pond and Davis Square.



MUSIC

ATTEND

Furrowed browse

From Page 1

Here are some general tips on finding great value, whether you're hunting vinyl, CDs or tapes.

First, the sine qua non, the store must have a used section. All the locations highlighted on our Record Store Day Walk buy and sell used records except one (have a look at the list of stores at the online info page and take a wild guess which). All the best crate digging happens in the used section. If you can fill out your shopping cart with a few steals there, you'll feel a lot better about opening up the wallet for a recent release or reissue from the new section.

Second, buy low. Is that too obvious? The reputational value of artists and albums, and their related resale value, rise and fall like shares in a normal (read: not Trumpian) stock market. No-brainer blue chip artists from Bob Dylan to Madonna all slip into the void of irrelevance periodically. Record stores respond by dropping them into the bargain bins. Be ready to pounce, because when the Massive Music Marketing Machine decides you should care about their music again, you will, and there will only be pricey reissues for sale.

Third, take chances. With used records, your misses are small losses and your hits are big wins.

If you're addicted to big name artists, you might luck into a bargain with their lesser known studio albums or live albums. People especially seem scared off by live albums. Not sure why. The ones worth reselling are expertly recorded sessions that show your favorite artists in their best light, delivering the music with a kind of personality and warmth that is mostly unattainable in a studio setting. My favorite Joni Mitchell record is a live album recorded at the Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles in 1974. Great sound, great crowd work, and she's dropping stone cold Joni wisdom throughout the set.

Take a leap of faith with lesser known artists. Like a good wine shop or bookshop, record stores are repositories of taste, and connoisseurship is built into the collection. Rebel against the monstrous algorithms that make our musical tastes homogenous. Trust the erudition of the inventory buyer to discover entirely new strata of rock, jazz and pop to enjoy. Ever heard of the Ramsey Lewis Trio, Buffy Sainte-Marie or O.C. Smith? I hadn't until I fished them out of the bargain bin. Now they're on my regular playlist.

I'll be out there Saturday, digging through the crates, looking for my next O.C. Smith. I can't afford much

extravagance in these blessed times of economic peril, but I can afford that. I hope you'll join me. And if you're looking for extra savings, pick up a specially marked issue (look for the Hump Nights stamp!) of The Week by Cambridge Day at Planet Records, Cheapo Records, Vinyl Index or Big Dig Records, good for reduced admission to the \$10 punk show at Cambridge Community Center after the walk.

Walk the walk, punk the rock!

Hit this

Friday and Saturday *Dark Spring Boston (Sonia/Middle East, Cambridge)*

Whence the darkness? Somewhere in the fertile overlap of the Venn diagram of postpunk, goth and clubby new wave, Dark Spring Boston sows its seed. Gross! The booking outfit (and way of life) has been manifesting as both annual fests and assorted one-off shows for years. The ambience shares some energy with Somergloom, but you can trust there will be more synths pulsing and pounding and pullulating on top of a drum machine. Because at the end of the day [*takes massive drag off a clove cigarette*] we all just want to dance.

Saturday *Jade Dust, Pushback, P.V., Homeworld (Cambridge Community Center, Cambridge)*

RIP Al Barile of SSD. The local punk legend passed away on Sunday. The guitarist was instrumental in establishing the bona fides of the Boston hardcore scene in the '80s. Underground music has since blossomed and branched out in a million different directions. But the fact that four punk acts are putting on a show at a community center in Cambridge on Saturday for a measly \$10 is a good reminder that the roots of the local scene that Barile helped establish still go deep. Doors at 5, show at 6, bring a specially marked issue of The Week for reduced admission to this capper at the end of the Cambridge Day Record Store Day Walk.

Sunday *Paul Karsen, Zazu Noir, Led the Collective, Fuego (The Jungle, Somerville)*

Heartbreak rules everything around me. The co-presenter is a label (Heartbreak Records), a media outlet (Heartbreak News) and puts on the occasional showcase. That's a full plate. The bill at the former police car garage spotlights rapper and label staple Paul Karsen, along with other local hip-hop talents. Karsen's latest release "Yoye" flips the dial between lyrical braggadocio and hip-hop theater. I don't think his song "Get The Paper" is about Cambridge Day, but you never know.



Julia Levine

A shopper browses at Cheapo Records on April 1.

FOOD

WHAT WE'RE HAVING



Tom Meek

A Veggie Italian sandwich at Elmendorf Baking Supplies in East Cambridge.

Vegetarian sandwiches on Cambridge Street

SNACK



Cafe & Bakery cinnamon roll

Price: \$7

Verveine, a newish addition to Central Square, bills itself less as a gluten-free restaurant and more as a restaurant that happens to be gluten free. The entire menu is made without the protein substance some bodies process poorly, but this isn't broadcast – an intentional choice by chef and owner Monica Glass, who started the cafe and bakery with restaurateur Ken Oringer (of Little Donkey and others) and wants it to be a place for everyone. The method seems to work, because if I hadn't been told I was eating a cinnamon roll made with the restriction, I would have had no idea. It was everything the pastry should be – soft, bready and heavy on the spice, topped with a thick glaze that had just the right consistency. It was messy, it was sticky and it was delicious, easily the best gluten-free treat I've had. Verveine is worth a try, no matter your relationship with the stuff.

MADELEINE AITKEN

■ **Verveine Cafe & Bakery, 298 Massachusetts Ave., Central Square, Cambridge**

By TOM MEEK

For those who aren't vegetarian leaning, veggie sandwiches might not leap out at you during a deli stop – skip on by to the ham on rye. And while that's understandable, you're missing out on some good eats. I've leaned more veggie than carnie recently, and it's led to many a tasty discovery. Plus there's the guilt-free buzz of eating healthier from more sustainably sourced food. Not too long ago I crowed about the fantastic olive-loaded veggie sandwich at La Saison; newly reacquainted myself with the All Star Sandwich Bar folk in Inman Square; and made the pleasant acquaintance of Elmendorf Baking Supplies (and its cafe) down the way in East Cambridge.

Both Cambridge Street stops offer impressive veggie slates. Most surprising is All Star, where the main draw are burgers and clubs but the nonmeat lineup is pretty robust.

It begins with an ALT – essentially a BLT with smashed avocado instead of bacon or, more to the point, avocado toast as a grilled sourdough sandwich. The falafel burger's more than serviceable and filling, but ask for some extra tahini to jazz it. The Tofused Banh Mi is a tangy munch with sweet chili-ginger-hoisin-glazed tofu, banh mi basics (fresh basil, cilantro, cucumber, pickled daikon and carrots), a fried egg and sesame sriracha aioli on a grilled brioché roll – boom!

The winner beyond that Tofused tasty is the veggie cubano of grilled marinated eggplant, zucchini, portobello mushrooms, Swiss cheese, tart dill pickles, yellow-dijon mustard and a cilantro aioli on pressed French bread. It won't make you forget the fantastic veggie cubano that was the signature sandwich at Chez Henri for so long, but it is an able pinch hitter.

All Star also has a warm, sun-infused space to camp out in, killer dill spears and beer to boot. The ambience is reminiscent of Hot Tomatoes in Union Square – two cozy, casual sandwich shops with solid eats.

■ **Elmendorf Baking Supplies, 594 Cambridge St., East Cambridge**

■ **All Star Sandwich Bar, 1245 Cambridge St., Inman Square, Cambridge**

Elmendorf is a unique little shop, part bakery supply (flour, flax and kitchenwares), part bodega, part cafe – cozy and quaint cannot be overused in describing it.

There's plenty of eye-grabbing pastries in the case and a short, sharp slate of a half-dozen sandwiches, of which half are vegetarian.

The list kicks off with the roasted sweet potato and tahini slaw inspired by a customer who wanted a vegetarian spin on the cafe's turkey and tahini sandwich. Elmendorf frames its Veggie Italian as a winner that will make meat lovers forget about meat.

Piled high on an Iggy's focaccia roll, the Italian packs in plenty of cheesy fennel, roasted mushrooms, a generous slather of artichoke spread and provolone with chili hots that give the shebang a nice, brow-sweating kick.

The superstar, however, is Elmendorf's eggplant banh mi, a generous heaping of honey-soy marinated eggplant on a crunchy ciabatta with an assortment of fresh and pickled veggies, herbs and hot peppers for the zing.

The combination of crisp fresh and devilishly dill-pickled veggies with those hots and honey soy is a flavor blast worthy of return visits.

For anyone who's a banh mi connoisseur and looking for something new, All Star and Elmendorf has you.

Tom Meek is a writer living in Cambridge. His reviews, essays, short stories and articles have appeared in the WBUR ARTery, The Boston Phoenix, The Boston Globe, The Rumpus, The Charleston City Paper and SLAB literary journal. Tom is also a member of the Boston Society of Film Critics and rides his bike everywhere.

ARTS

THEATER

In ‘Crowns,’ hats are the material to explore Black womanhood

By MADELEINE AITKEN

In “Crowns,” opening Friday at Arrow Street Arts, hats are a springboard for an exploration of Black history and identity.

Yolanda (Mirrorajah Metcalfe), a young Black woman from Brooklyn, New York, is sent by her mother to stay with her aunt in South Carolina after her brother is killed.

For Yolanda’s older Southern Black relatives, hats are everything, and each comes with their own need and occasion – there are hats for flirting, for funerals, for churchgoing and for baptisms.

When director Regine Vital read the script for “Crowns” for Moonbox Productions, she “immediately knew these women.”

“The church lady is iconic in Black culture,” Vital said. “You either know a church lady or you’re somehow attached to a church lady.”

Playwright Regina Taylor based the play on a book by photographers Michael Cunningham and Craig

Marberry called “Crowns: Portraits of Black Women in Church Hats.” Vital recalled sitting in the front pew of church when she was a child visiting her grandmother, surrounded by other Black women in their church hats.

“I have never forgotten that image of these amazing women, all wearing their hats,” Vital said.

When Yolanda arrives in South Carolina, her grandmother takes her to church. A teenager in an unfamiliar place, she’s initially resistant, but begins spending time with a group of six older women who use their hats to tell her stories from their lives. As they trace the rich history of their hats, the cast, which includes Mildred Walker, Cortlandt Barrett, Lovely Hoffman, Kaedon Gray and Aliyah Harris, helps Yolanda come to terms with her multifaceted identity.

“She’s just lost her brother, her best friend, and what she needs is community to let her know she’s not alone and that she will get through the hard times,” Vital said. “It’s through hearing their stories that she’s able to begin to

see that maybe this isn’t the end of everything, that she can make it to the other side.”

The story is underscored mostly by gospel music, some of it arranged by music director David Coleman to have a more jazzlike feel, with rap and hip-hop mixed in.

“This is an intergenerational story, and I think the hip-hop alongside the gospel and jazz is a way of expressing that,” Vital said.

As it does for all its shows, Moonbox will support a local nonprofit during the run of “Crowns.” Rosie’s Place, founded in 1974 as the first women-only shelter in the United States, continues to provide meals, shelter and wide-ranging support, including help navigating housing and education services, for 12,000 women a year.

“It’s an organization that really puts women at the forefront, which is what we’re doing with the play,” Vital said.

■ **“Crowns” runs Friday to May 4 at Arrow Street Arts, 2 Arrow St., Harvard Square, Cambridge.**



A publicity image for “Crowns,” a gospel musical playing in Cambridge from Friday to May 4.



Denim at Buffalo Exchange on March 26 in Davis Square, Somerville.

WEAR

Signaling values is in our jeans

By JULIE MAHDAVI

Fashion is more than just clothing – it reflects society’s values, conflicts and transformations. In politically charged times, it becomes a powerful tool of expression, signaling allegiance to movements and ideologies. Palestinian scarves flooded Harvard’s campus not long ago, an example of fashion as a protest.

Denim, in particular, has long been a fabric of resistance. Wrangler, associated with rugged Americana and conservative, country-western culture, contrasts sharply with Levi’s, which has historically aligned itself with progressive causes from civil rights to environmental activism – proving that even denim carries a political identity.

You may not know what your closet says to the public, but history is woven into every piece. Sustainability has also reshaped fashion as a form of activism. Thrifting has never been more popular, with consumers rejecting fast fashion in favor of ethically made or vintage pieces.

Across our local campuses, denim jackets and denim-on-denim ensembles are making a comeback, reflecting

effortless cool and historical significance. Should politics influence our wardrobe choices, or should style stand on its own? In places such as Cambridge or Somerville, the two often go hand in hand. (The Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers decided to mark this year’s Sexual Assault Awareness Month by wearing denim jeans and a message T-shirt and participating in Denim Day, which is April 30.)

This return to denim isn’t just aesthetic – it’s a statement of resilience, adaptability and individuality. As brands refine classic silhouettes, denim remains a cultural staple, bridging past and present with authenticity and purpose.

Fashion will continue to evolve as a form of political commentary. Advances in digital fashion and art could create ways for individuals to align themselves with causes beyond physical garments. Additionally, the blending of technology and clothing – such as smart textiles that display real-time messages – may further integrate activism into daily wear. Fashion remains an accessible yet impactful way for individuals to navigate and communicate their stance in an ever-changing world.

BEHOLD

Teaching artists get their turn in ‘Photo / Faculty’



A detail from a work by Matthew Monteith in “Photo / Faculty,” in Cambridge through May 17.

By CLAIRE OGDEN

“Photo / Faculty” opened last weekend at The VanDernoot Gallery in Porter Square, the twist on this group show being that every artist teaches at a New England college or university.

The theme makes you look more closely and wonder what each artist’s teaching style is like. Does Tony Luong – whose playful photo of a Barcelona man feeding birds with one hand and smoking a cigarette with the other – lead a jokey critique session? What fun props might Brian Ulrich bring to the classroom, since his lively untitled still life holds trinkets and curiosities galore?

The show is eclectic, like many group exhibitions, with many highlights. Amy Lovera’s ghostly black and white “18 wishes” is right at home next to Jessina Lynn Leonard’s “Abeceda (L is for Light),” a circular image of a blue candle on grid paper.

In the corner, Joetta Maue has a gem of an installation called “Layers of light,” in which photos on silk hang ever so delicately from the ceiling. A set of glass prisms, also hanging, cast tiny shadows onto the wall.

“Photo / Faculty” gives viewer an excuse to look closely and think more deeply about the people behind the pieces. Artists tend to need day jobs, it’s true, and often teaching jobs at

that. But those aren’t just for a paycheck, the show seems to say. They are part of an ongoing exchange between student and teacher – one whose ripple effect changes the art practice of both for the better. The show shines a light on the intertwined nature of education and art making.

“Photo / Faculty” was curated by Catherine LeComte Lecce, the Photographic Resource Center’s program manager and an artist in her own right.

■ **“Photo / Faculty” through May 17 at The VanDernoot Gallery, 1815 Massachusetts Ave., Porter Square, Cambridge.**

■ Send letters to forpublication@cambridgeday.com with the name, address, phone number and relevant affiliations of the writer or writers

OPINIONS

The Serious Case for MegaCambridge* and working together on transit

By BURHAN AZEEM
and JARRED JOHNSON

At dawn, the invasion began. For months, outlying municipalities had prepared for Boston's preemptive strike.

Somerville thwarted green line invaders with casual joggers who effortlessly outran the trolleys and secured the perimeter. Revere flooded the Sumner Tunnel, funneling invaders onto the blue line and trapping them at Wonderland. Medford went full pyromaniac, setting the orange line ablaze and forcing panicked troops to jump in the Mystic. Above the red line, protesters jumped in unison, crashing the ceiling and burying the last wave of Boston reinforcements.

Seizing this chaos, Cantabrigians cycled triumphantly over the Charles, reclaiming their rightful place as the capital of Massachusetts. By the time the sun had set, one phrase echoed throughout Beacon Hill: "MegaCambridge is inevitable."

This is a goofy tale, of course – a reference to the annual April Fool's joke that Cambridge should annex Boston. Still, beneath the silliness is a hint of truth: Something is wrong.

We're one of the wealthiest metro regions in the country, with the gross domestic product of Poland and some of the world's top universities. Yet when it comes to public transportation, we've been stuck. In many ways, we're



Marc Levy

just trying to keep the system from falling apart – let alone expanding or improving it.

Meanwhile, other cities are blowing past us. Los Angeles is on track to essentially double its metro system by 2050. Seattle has been growing its network seven times faster than we have over the past 20 years. Washington, D.C., has already surpassed its prepandemic ridership. And that's just within the United States – our global peers have been even more ambitious. At the heart of our stagnation is one persistent issue: our inability to plan and act as a unified region.

Each city has its own rules, departments and most importantly, its

own narrow priorities – often defined by artificial borders. As a result, bike lanes disappear at the edge of town, bus lanes stop short of where people actually need to go and fire stations are clustered redundantly. The layers of red tape and duplicated policies make coordination nearly impossible – and extremely expensive.

Take the green line extension: It became one of the most expensive light rail projects in history. Meanwhile, Montreal is building a fully automated light metro that will connect suburbs eight miles from downtown in just 19 minutes – for half the cost per mile. And that's after Montreal's project hit delays and overruns. Put differently,

building in the Boston region costs more than tunneling through century-old infrastructure full of unexploded dynamite.

Of course, the goal isn't for Boston, Cambridge, Somerville and other cities to lose their identities. But we do need to act together. Bluebikes is a great local example – what started as a small partnership has grown into a multicity network that keeps expanding year after year. Or look at Seattle's Link light rail: Line 1 now stretches more than 30 miles across six municipalities in a little over an hour, each with its own character but all better connected. Denver's RTD crosses political and geographic boundaries too

– despite local differences, the system has built 33 miles of light rail and nearly 54 miles of electrified commuter rail since 2002, the first new system of its kind in the United States.

We don't need to wait for a sweeping policy change from Beacon Hill. Residents should be asking their local leaders – mayors and council members alike – how they plan to improve mobility, not just inside their own cities but across the region. Few of us live our lives within a single municipal border. We commute. We visit friends and family. We rely on shared infrastructure that often fails to connect the dots.

You can play a role too. This fall, the MBTA is launching its 25-year long-range plan. This is the moment to speak up. The T needs to hear your frustrations with how disconnected the region feels. Show up to meetings. Ask your legislators how they plan to fund the MBTA so these plans aren't just dreams on paper.

Yes, "MegaCambridge" might've started as a goofy idea – but underneath the jokes is a real call for unity. We have the talent, wealth and creativity to fix what's broken. What we need is the will to work across old boundaries.

Boston changed the world once. Let's prove we can figure out how to get across town, too.

Burhan Azeem is a Cambridge city councillor. Jarred Johnson is the former executive director of TransitMatters.

Legal ads

■ Send legal ads and public notices at least six business days ahead of the intended publication date to advertising@cambridgeday.com with contact information that includes a contact name, phone number and address.

Ordinance 2025-7 - Public Hearing

**Public Notice
Relative to Zoning
City of Cambridge, Massachusetts
Office of the City Clerk**

The Ordinance Committee, comprised of the entire membership of the City Council, will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, April 29, 2025 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.** on a Zoning Petition by the Cambridge City Council to amend the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in Article 11.000 with the intent to amend certain subsections of the Affordable Housing Overlay, Section 11.207 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, with the intent of limiting allowable height increases in Residence C-1 districts, removing references to provisions in the base zoning that are no longer applicable, and clarifying references to departments responsible for enforcement.

This public hearing will be hybrid allowing participation in the Sullivan Chamber, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and remotely via ZOOM. The ZOOM URL to view the meeting is <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/97895847144>. **If you would like to speak at this Public Hearing, please register to do so using this URL:**

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/CityCouncil/PublicCommentSignUpForm>. You may also email comments

to the City Clerk at Cityclerk@cambridgema.gov.

To request a copy of the amendment in full, e-mail City Clerk, Diane LeBlanc at DLeBlanc@Cambridgema.gov. Copies are also available at the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and online at www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/zoninganddevelopment/zoning/amendments.

The City of Cambridge will provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities upon request. Please contact the City Clerk at 617-349-4260 or at DLeBlanc@Cambridgema.gov.

For the Committee,

Vice Mayor Marc McGovern,
Chair

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Planning Board of the City of Cambridge will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, April 29, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.** located at Remote participation on Zoom (see details below) on a Zoning Petition by BMR-320 Charles LLC c/o BioMed Realty, L.P. to amend the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in Article 20.000 with the intent to Create a new overlay district called the East Cambridge Community Enhancement (ECCE) Overlay District that would 1) allow for increases in height and

floor area by special permit to facilitate the conversion of older industrial properties to new structures in a way that will 2) improve the edge of the district adjacent to Ahern Field, improve the pedestrian experience within the zoning district, and/or provide support for community services in East Cambridge. This hearing will be on Zoom Webinar. Go to www.cambridgema.gov/planningboard to view petition documents, send written comments before the hearing, or learn how to join the hearing online or by phone. Contact the Community Development Department at cddzoning@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-4600 with questions. Written comments received by 12:00 P.M. on the Friday before the meeting will be considered by Board Members in advance of the meeting. Comments received later will be entered into the record.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Planning Board of the City of Cambridge will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, April 29, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.** located at Remote participation on Zoom (see details below) on a Zoning Petition by Cambridge City Council to amend the Cambridge Article 5.000 and Section 20.70 Zoning Ordinance in with the intent of (1) replacing the Floodplain Overlay and Planning Board Special Permit with the Massachusetts model ordinance structure for permitting development in the flood plain through administrative review; (2) updating references to the most recent FEMA maps

to maintain compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program; and (3) revising other parts of the Zoning Ordinance for internal consistency. This hearing will be on Zoom Webinar. Go to www.cambridgema.gov/planningboard to view petition documents, send written comments before the hearing, or learn how to join the hearing online or by phone. Contact the Community Development Department at cddzoning@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-4600 with questions. Written comments received by 12:00 P.M. on the Friday before the meeting will be considered by Board Members in advance of the meeting. Comments received later will be entered into the record.

Ordinance 2025-9 - Public Hearing

**Public Notice
Relative to Zoning
City of Cambridge, Massachusetts
Office of the City Clerk**

The Ordinance Committee, comprised of the entire membership of the City Council, will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, April 30, 2025 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.** on a Zoning Petition by the Cambridge City Council to amend the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in Article 5.000 and Section 20.70 with the intent of (1) replacing the Floodplain Overlay and Planning Board Special Permit with the Massachusetts model ordinance structure for permitting development in the flood plain through administrative review; (2) updating references

to the most recent FEMA maps to maintain compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program; and (3) revising other parts of the Zoning Ordinance for internal consistency.

This public hearing will be hybrid allowing participation in the Sullivan Chamber, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and remotely via ZOOM. The ZOOM URL to view the meeting is <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/97895847144>. **If you would like to speak at this Public Hearing, please register to do so using this URL:**

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/CityCouncil/PublicCommentSignUpForm>. You may also email comments to the City Clerk at Cityclerk@cambridgema.gov.

To request a copy of the amendment in full, e-mail City Clerk, Diane LeBlanc at DLeBlanc@Cambridgema.gov. Copies are also available at the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and online at www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/zoninganddevelopment/zoning/amendments.

The City of Cambridge will provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities upon request. Please contact the City Clerk at 617-349-4260 or at DLeBlanc@Cambridgema.gov.

For the Committee,

Vice Mayor Marc McGovern,
Chair

WILD THINGS

■ Send your high-resolution images of urban wild things with location, date, photographer's name and other useful information for possible use online to photography@cambridgeday.com.

Robber ducks

The American wigeon is an outlaw among birds, and a very noisy land grazer willing to steal to eat

By JEANINE FARLEY

American wigeons (*Mareca americana*) are dabbling ducks that sometimes migrate through our area and have been spotted recently in Cambridge's Fresh Pond. Dabbling ducks upend themselves to feed near the surface. They have a comblike structure around the edge of the bill that strains water and traps food. They use this comb also to preen their feathers and grasp slippery aquatic plants.

Very rarely do American wigeons breed in Massachusetts, so the birds at Fresh Pond will probably make their way farther north soon to breed in Canada or Alaska. Look for these shy birds if you are near a pond or river, but don't get too close – they scare easily.

Male American wigeons have cream-colored feathers on the crown and front of the head, so an earlier name for this bird was baldpate, or white head. (Bald used to refer to whiteness, not lack of hair, which explains why bald eagles have the name they do.) Eventually the bird became known as the wigeon, but even that name was inconsistent. The word wigeon was often spelled widgeon or widgen. If you research this duck, you may have to try multiple spelling combinations to unearth the information you seek.

The male wigeon has green feathers behind each eye. It is rust-colored on its sides and black in the rear. It has a light blue bill. Female wigeons are mostly shades of brown.

Contrary to what you may have

heard, most ducks do not quack. Ducks make a variety of calls, including whistles, coos and grunts. Most ducks are quiet; the wigeon is an exception – it a noisy bird. You are likely to hear it before you see it. The male communicates by giving a high-pitched whee-whee, which I think sounds like the squeaker in a stuffed toy but others have described as sounding like a soft kazoo.

Most dabbling ducks spend their time in shallow water, but again the American wigeon is an exception. It frequently grazes on land, and it also likes deep water. Wigeons at times get food by stealing it from other ducks, so some people call them poacher or robber ducks. Ornithologist Edward Howe Forbush once described their feeding behavior this way: "As it is rather a poor diver it watches these diving Ducks, and as one comes up from the bottom with the wild celery or other favorite root or bud in its bill, the Baldpate snatches the morsel and makes off. It also feeds much upon pond weeds and other water plants."

After breeding in the north, American wigeons return south in the fall and will once again visit our ponds and bays. Often, one or two Eurasian wigeons will join the group after flying to our shores from Iceland.

In *The Birds of the Cambridge Region* (1906), William Brewster writes that the baldpate, once common, was by 1906 a rare autumn visitor. He goes on,

Dr. Samuel Cabot once told me that

when he was at Harvard College (1832–1836) he used to kill American Widgeon regularly and in some numbers, in autumn, finding them either in Fresh Pond or along the then retired reaches of Alewife Brook between the outlet of this pond and the road (now Massachusetts Avenue) leading from Harvard Square to Menotomy (now Arlington). They must have ceased to frequent these localities before my shooting experience began, for I have never met with the species anywhere in the region about Cambridge.

More about ducks

What distinguishes a duck from a goose or a swan? All three are members of the same family – but ducks are smaller and have shorter necks. Ducks (and swans) have legs that are far back on the body, which gives them a waddling gait. Male and female ducks look different from each other; male and female swans and geese look virtually the same.

People have hunted ducks since prehistoric times. Because ducks floating on water cannot react quickly, the term "a sitting duck" has come to mean "an easy target."

In 2002, a psychologist named Richard Wiseman studied global humor and concluded that of all the animals in the animal kingdom, ducks are the funniest. "If you're going to tell a joke involving an animal, make it a duck," he said. Perhaps this is why we have the animated characters Donald, Daffy and Scrooge, as well as the Aflac duck?

Wild Things is taking questions

Do you have questions about birds, bugs, bees, butterflies or other wildlife? Send questions to wildthings@cambridgeday.com and we will find out the answer.

Tom Murray, all photos
American wigeons have a white belly. While the female ducks are shades of brown, male wigeons have green streaks behind the eyes.



Wiseman also concluded that the funniest joke in the world (liked by the most people in the most countries) involved duck hunters. It goes something like this:

Two New Jersey duck hunters are out in the woods when one of them falls to the ground. The fallen man doesn't seem to be breathing, and his eyes have rolled back in his head.

The other hunter whips out his cellphone and calls 911. He gasps

to the operator, "My friend is dead! What can I do?"

The operator says, "Calm down. I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead."

There is a silence, and then a shot is heard. The hunter comes back on the line: "Okay, now what?"

Jeanine Farley is an educational writer who has lived in the Boston area for more than 30 years. She enjoys taking photos of our urban wild things.

