



CAMBRIDGE DAY

THE WEEK OF APRIL 30 – MAY 7, 2026

FREE

City council sees one way forward for Garden Street



Marc Levy / file

The Garden Street bike lanes continue to be a contentious topic in City Council meetings.

By JANE PETERSEN

After contentious comment and discussion, Cambridge City Council on Monday voted 5-4 in favor of keeping Garden Street a one-way road with bike lanes on either side for the majority of its length. The vote reversed last year’s 5-4 vote to return two-way traffic to the West Cambridge street while making the bike lanes adjacent, a move that would eliminate street parking.

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, Vice Mayor Burhan Azeem, and Councillors Marc McGovern and Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler flipped from the minority to the majority, thanks to new council member Ayah Al-Zubi, who brought the policy order to council. Councillors E. Denise Simmons, Patty Nolan, and Cathie Zusy voted

against the change, in line with their votes last year. They were joined in the minority by new Councillor Timothy Flaherty.

Garden Street was converted to a one-way street in 2022. While many bikers and Garden Street residents say they feel safer, residents of nearby streets have lamented increased traffic flow, which they blame on traffic on drivers outbound from Harvard Square needing to find new routes.

A neighborhood divided

A marathon public comment period saw over 70 people speak during Monday’s meeting, with about 60 in favor of keeping Garden Street one-way. Speakers for each side said their preferred configuration was safer.

Speakers in favor of keeping

the street one way noted that this was the option suggested by the Department of Transportation in a 2025 report.

“Let’s use engineering judgement, not guesses, to ensure our entire community moves with fluidity and safety,” said Cambridge resident Susan Reed during public comment, supporting the policy order. “This shouldn’t be ‘my street against your street’... this order is a win for everyone because it finally looks at our traffic holistically.” Senior citizens and family members of those with disabilities also spoke in favor of the current configuration, noting that the design council approved last year would eliminate parking spots and loading zones that they rely on.

See GARDEN STREET, page 2

New Copper Mill choices



CBT Architects

Copper Mill’s option 3 features a stepped design with a 3-story podium and towers of 17, 23, and 24 stories.

By MICHAEL F. FITZGERALD AND SYDNEY WISE

The developer of the proposed Copper Mill mixed-use development in Davis Square released four new designs on Tuesday in response to criticism about the project’s scale from area residents and MassHousing, the state agency involved in its permitting.

All of the options offer 500 units. One of the four options is 26 stories, the same number as in the original proposal. A second is 25 stories, a third has three tiers, ranging from 17 to 24 stories, and the fourth has interlocking buildings of 15, 23 and 24 stories. The retail podiums of the designs range from two to four levels.

Andrew Flynn, Copper Mill’s CEO, issued a statement that said in part “The spectrum of design concepts is intended to represent different composites based on the aggregated feedback that we have received.”

The previous night, Flynn spoke for about 15 minutes at the Davis Square Neighborhood Council (DSNC) meeting. He stayed afterward for at least 45 minutes, talking with local residents about the project and his goals.

During the meeting, Frank Malsbenden, a Davis Square resident whose election to the DSNC board was announced later in the same meeting, said by using the state’s 40B provision “you’re going around us and going to the state in a way.” He asked Flynn if Copper Mill would consider withdrawing from it.

Flynn said “I think it is something we would be willing to consider. I am not here to say we are withdrawing it by any means.” He disagreed that 40B was a loophole for the developer and noted that Copper Mill was “pushed by the previous administration [of Mayor Katjana Ballantyne] to pursue it.”

See COPPER MILL page 5

Did the Ouija board predict Tom Perrotta’s career?

By TOM MEEK

For a guy who grew up in working-class New Jersey and spent most of a decade wondering if his writing career would ever catch fire, Tom Perrotta’s done pretty well for himself, with two novels that have been turned into movies and a third that was a popular TV series. His latest book may end up on a screen, as well, and Wednesday he’ll be reading from it in the Brattle Theatre. “Ghost Town” is a com-



Author Tom Perrotta.

PELLING coming-of-age saga set in 1970s New Jersey, where three teens are dealing with grief and intolerance. (See our review on page 10.)

It’s a coming home novel of sorts for Perrotta, who set it in a town called Creamwood, which sounds a lot like his hometown of Garwood. Jimmy Perrini is a teenager whose mother has died suddenly. He’s on summer break and his father and sister work long hours and are emotionally distant, meaning Jimmy is essentially on

his own, “just kind of wandering around this town,” Perrotta said.

Jimmy’s unsupervised existence creates opportunity for self-discovery as well as a gateway for risk and bad influence. He catches on with Olivia, an older student he has a crush on who also has lost a parent, and Eddie, an edgy burnout who becomes the trio’s main instigator.

Olivia and Jimmy end up experimenting with a Ouija board to contact their dead parents. “That’s where the sort of ghost

story comes in,” Perrotta said. “That comes out of my own teenage experimenting with Ouija boards. I got totally freaked out by it when I was 13 or 14 years old. When people say, ‘Do you believe in ghosts?’ it’s like, ‘well, I did that night.’” The story’s twist, Perrotta said, “is that the spirit they get into contact with is not the one they were looking for.” Another development has to do with race and tolerance.

See PERROTTA, page 10

LOCAL

Cambridge resident who went missing found safe

By MICHAEL F. FITZGERALD

A Cambridge man who went missing for nearly a week was found in good physical health on Monday morning.

Toshiaki Takenaka, a 21-year-old graduate of Hult International Business School who lived in East Cambridge near Lechmere Square, had left his apartment Tuesday night April 21. After missing a scheduled call with family the next day, Takenaka's father, also Toshiaki Takenaka, had grown concerned. Takenaka had not been to work at his job at Datadog, a Boston company that provides services for cloud-based computing. And the younger Takenaka left his cell phone, wallet, passport and green card in his apartment. Takenaka is from the Dominican Republic and has Lawful Permanent Res-



Courtesy of the Takenaka family

Toshiaki Takenaka in an undated photo.

ident status in the United States.

The younger Takenaka had been active, volunteering at community events, including Mon-

day's Boston Marathon, and had signed up as a volunteer for the forthcoming World Cup.

A missing persons poster was

released on Friday afternoon and updated during the weekend to add a photo taken from surveillance footage of what Takenaka might be wearing. On Monday April 27, Cambridge police announced that the younger Takenaka had been found in good health and taken to a local hospital for tests.

No other details were released, to respect his privacy. Takenaka's father, reached by phone at the hospital, told Cambridge Day he didn't know where his son had been found, but he felt "reborn" to be reunited with his son.

"It was like falling into a black hole," he said of the search. "You don't know how to feel. Your brain can't think." Takenaka's father thanked "everyone who has helped in any way, praying, looking for him, asking . . . we're forever in your debt."

Garden Street

From Page 1

"The proposed plan would eliminate the ability of ADA [the Americans with Disabilities Act] vehicles, shuttles and other forms of transportation to safely pick up and drop off my husband or other individuals with disabilities," said Garden street resident Kathleen Caple. "The current configuration works."

Among residents who disagreed was Cambridge resident Phyllis Simpkins, who said it was her fifth time speaking in favor of two-way traffic on Garden before council. "Why is Garden Street more special than any of the other streets (in the neighborhood)? All the rest of us are coping with increased traffic."

Councillor Flaherty said the skew of the public comments toward one-way did not reflect his own canvass of the neighborhood. He said he talked with over 250 people since council's last meeting on April 13 and "maybe 75 percent preferred two-way traffic."

DOT options all safe

The Department of Transportation said all the options it put forward were safe. "We would not advance a design we believe to be unsafe," said Jackie McLaughlin, Department of Transportation communications Manager Jackie McLaughlin told Cambridge Day over email. "That said, maintaining Garden Street as one-way has remained our department's preferred option."

While Zusy questioned the department's study, saying it wasn't "broad enough," McLaughlin said that wasn't the case.

"The analysis was not limited to Garden Street alone. It also considered the surrounding street network to better understand broader safety patterns and potential shifts in travel behavior."

The council amends the CSO to require 25 miles of separated bike lanes along Cambridge streets, including Garden Street, within seven years.

Garden Street becomes one-way for vehicles between Huron and Concord Ave and adds 11/4 miles of separated bike lanes from Huron Avenue to Mason Street.

City Council receives four options for new traffic flow on Garden Street.

Councillor Ayah Al-Zubi brings forward a policy order that would override the council's 2025 vote. The Council votes 5-4 to adopt the policy order.



Timeline of changes to Garden Street

McLaughlin referenced a 2023 report, which also said that a return to two-way traffic would "likely reduce comfort and safety" for walkers and bikers and could reduce some of the cut-through traffic residents had been complaining of, but "likely not change to the extent that residents hope for," given traffic increases across the city.

Local groups have done their own analysis, too, though. West Cambridge Neighborhood Coalition leader Daniel Vlock on Friday sent an email to coalition members saying an analysis of the city's own data revealed an increase in the number of cycling accidents in the area surrounding Garden Street, from eight between 2017-2019 to 30 between 2023-2025. While this number doesn't adjust for changes in the number of riders over time in the area, Vlock thinks this demonstrates a clear pattern.

"Now that the city [council] has voted I think they need to bear responsibility for what happens next," Vlock told Cambridge Day over email. "They were all informed about this prior to the vote and so if accidents, unfortunately, continue to occur they can't say weren't warned."

When asked about this analysis, the Department of Transportation said it would be reviewing the data.

"Good governance" debated

Flaherty said "the reversal of a

decision that was made last year" was "bad public policy." This sparked comments from other councillors.

"I respectfully disagree," said Al-Zubi. She referenced a key campaign promise of Flaherty's, to reverse zoning policy, and said "From my understanding, to the extent we're revisiting the multifamily zoning ordinance, I believe we should be able to explore any work that we've passed that warrants necessary conversation."

Councillors in the majority defended their right to reverse this decision. McGovern said the council was responding to the results of the last election, in which the fate of Garden Street was an issue for some voters.

"I certainly hope that if the Democrats take back the House and the Senate and the White House eventually, that they are going to revisit a hell of a lot of policies that have been passed recently and not say, 'Oh, well, Republicans passed it. We can't go back and fix it,'" McGovern said.

Simmons presented two motions that would delay any action — one to table the policy order, and another to refer it to the Transportation Committee. Both were voted down, as was a late amendment submitted by Zusy that asked the Transportation Department to do further analysis.

As the council proceeded toward a vote, the last councillor to reveal her vote was Siddiqui. "I want to remain consistent with how I approached this issue last year, and consistent with the professional recommendations of city staff," she said, as she said she would vote in favor of the order.

She also offered a plea for civility.

"I want to ask my colleagues and public to respect each other's perspectives. As a body, we represent the whole community, and that means that individual counselors sometimes are going to have differing opinions on what's in front of us, and we're going to look at the same set of facts and come to different conclusions about the right forms of action," Siddiqui said. "That doesn't make anyone's views invalid."

The tenor of the debate on safety disappointed Nolan, who told Cambridge Day it "broke my trust that people weren't willing to ensure that false narratives were not being promoted."

She agreed with Flaherty's critique on council changing its decision a year later without new information.

"Will we be able to get beyond this? I hope so. And yet, I think it's unfortunate, because I don't think it was good governance or good policy to do this, and I still maintain my belief that it's safer and better for the whole city, for us to have reverted Garden Street to two-way."

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Meet the candidates running for state legislature

By SYDNEY WISE

Tuesday was the deadline for candidates for the state legislature to submit nomination papers. Normally a sleepy cycle, this year sees seven contested Democratic primaries out of 11 seats.

A candidate needs a minimum of 150 signatures to run for representative and 300 to run for senate. After certification, candidates have until May 26 to file with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The primary election takes place September 1.

Here's how the races shape up:

The House

24th Middlesex District
Who's voting: Residents of northwest Cambridge in Ward 11, precincts 1 & 3, plus some Arlington and Belmont residents.

Who's running: **Nomita Ganguly** is challenging incumbent **David Rogers**. Ganguly is an attorney and has worked in legislative advocacy. Rogers, elected in 2012, serves as Chairperson of the Joint Committee on Higher Education.

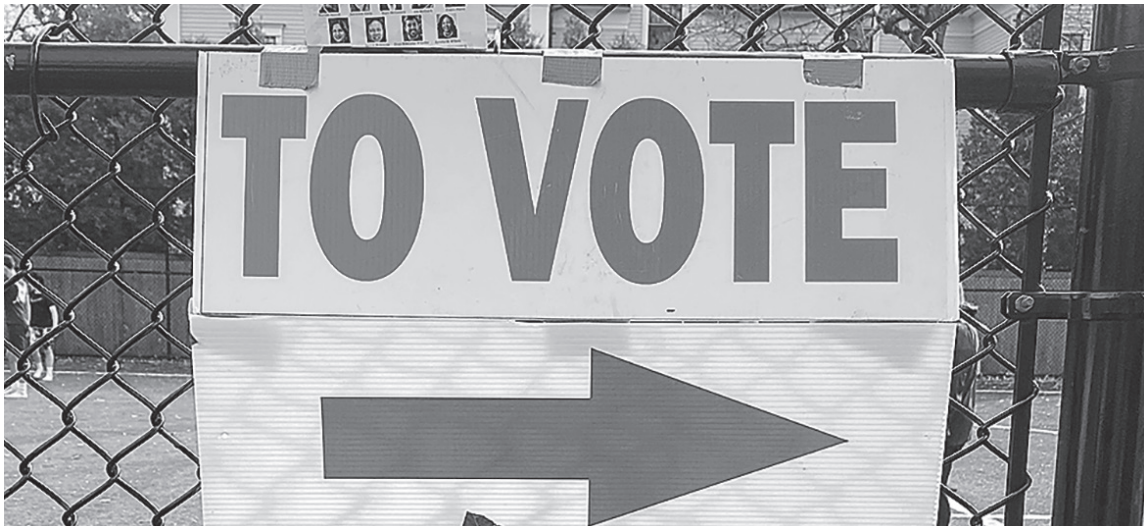
25th Middlesex District
Who's voting: Cambridge residents in and around Harvard Square: namely Ward 3, precinct 3A; Ward 4, precincts 2, 2A and 3; Ward 6, precincts 2 and 3; Ward 7; Ward 8; and Ward 10, precincts 1A and 2.

Who's running: **Evan MacKay** is challenging incumbent **Marjorie Decker** in a rematch of 2024, a race Decker won by 41 votes. Decker was elected in 2012 and serves as Chairperson for the Joint Committee on Public Health. MacKay is a union organizer and Harvard teaching fellow.

26th Middlesex District
Who's voting: Residents of East Cambridge, including Ward 1, precinct 3; Ward 1, precincts 1, 2, and 3A; Ward 3, precincts 1, 2, and 3; Ward 4, precinct 1; Ward 5, precincts 1 and 3; and Ward 6, precincts 1 and 1A. Somerville residents in Ward 1, precincts 1, 2, 3, and 4, or in Ward 2, precinct 1A, are also in the 26th Middlesex District.

Who's running: **Neil Miller** is challenging incumbent **Mike Connolly**. Connolly was elected in 2016 and has not faced a challenger since. He is Vice Chair of the House Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs. Miller is a student at Harvard Kennedy School and formerly worked as a data scientist for the federal government.

27th Middlesex District
Who's voting: Residents of central Somerville, including Ward 1, precinct 4A; Ward 2, precincts



Marc Levy / file

Election Day and bake sale signs share space Nov. 7, 2023, at the Graham & Parks School in Cambridge's Neighborhood 9.

1, 2, 3, and 4; Ward 3; Ward 4, precinct 2A; Ward 5; and Ward 6, precincts 1, 2, 3, and 4, will vote for representative in the 27th Middlesex District.

Who's running: The seat is open because current rep. Erika Uytterhoeven is running for state Senate. Somerville City Councilor **Ben Ewen-Campen** faces **Olivia Gilligan Corsetti**, who worked as campaign manager for former Somerville mayor Katjana Ballyntyne.

29th Middlesex District
Who's voting: This district covers West Cambridge, including Ward 9; Ward 10, precincts 1 and 3; and Ward 11, precincts 1A, 2, and 3A, and some of Watertown.

Who's running: Incumbent **Steve Owens**, Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development.

34th Middlesex District
Who's voting: Somervillians in Ward 4, precincts 1, 2, 3, and 4; Ward 6, precinct 3A; and Ward 7. Some Medford residents are also in this district.

Who's running: Current rep. Christine Barber is leaving the seat to run for state Senate. Somerville City Councilor **Will Mbah**, **Christopher Oates** and **Paul Ruseau** have announced that they'll run for the seat. Mbah was elected Councilor at Large in 2017. He's served with the exception of the 2021 term, when he relinquished his seat to run for Mayor. Ruseau is a software engineer at Dana-Farber and a member of the Medford school committee. Oates has a background in political risk assessment and founded a tech company using AI to improve government accessibility.

2nd Suffolk District
Who's voting: East Cantabrigians in Ward 1, precincts 1 and 2, and Ward 2, precinct 3. Pieces of Boston and Everett are also included.

Who's running: Incumbent **Daniel Joseph Ryan** was elected

to the seat in 2014 and serves as Chair of the Joint Committee on Public Service.

18th Suffolk District
Who's voting: Southeast Cambridge, including Ward 1, precinct 2A, and Ward 5, precinct 2. The rest of the district covers Boston.

Who's running: Incumbent **Michael Moran**, who won a 2005 special election, handily beat a challenger the next year and has not faced a challenge since.

The Senate

2nd Middlesex District
Who's voting: All of Somerville. Cambridge residents in Ward 7, precinct 1; Ward 8, precinct 1;

Ward 10; and Ward 11 are also represented here.

Who's running: Reps. **Christine Barber** and **Erika Uytterhoeven** have both vacated their seats. Barber, elected in 2014, currently serves as Chairperson of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. Uytterhoeven was elected in 2020.

Also running: Cambridge Vice Mayor **Burhan Azeem**, Somerville City Councilor **Matt McLaughlin**, and Winchester School Committee member **Tom Hopcroft**. Azeem was elected to the Cambridge city council in 2021, while McLaughlin was elected to represent Somerville's Ward 1 in 2013. Hopcroft was elected to the school committee

in 2021. The 2nd Middlesex District has been served by Patricia Jehlen for 20 years. Jehlen, 82, announced in December that she would not seek reelection.

Middlesex and Suffolk District
Who's voting: Resident of Cambridge east of Harvard Square, in Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; Ward 7, precincts 2, 2A, and 3; and Ward 8, precinct 3. Bits of Boston, as well as all of Chelsea and Everett, are also included.

Who's running: Incumbent **Sal DiDomenico**, elected in 2010. He's Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Bills in the Third Reading and Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Ethics.

Suffolk and Middlesex District
Who's voting: West Cambridge, including Ward 8, precinct 2, and Ward 9. All of Belmont and Watertown as well as some of Boston.

Who's running: Incumbent **William Brownsberger** will be challenged by **Daniel Lander**. Brownsberger is chairperson of the Senate Committee on the Census. Lander is an aide to Boston Mayor Michelle Wu.

(Disclosure: Lander's mother, Lori Lander, is on the Local News Fund Advisory Board at the Cambridge Community Foundation, which has given financial support to Cambridge Day.)

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MARKET PULSE

Active Listings
as of April 29th

CAMBRIDGE		
CONDOS	SINGLES	MULTIS
116	33	35

SOMERVILLE		
CONDOS	SINGLES	MULTIS
95	17	50

Source: MLS PIN statistics for "Market Pulse"

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LOCAL

Lesley faculty launch two-day strike



Jay Rowell

Lesley students and faculty marched with posters at the university strike on Tuesday afternoon.

By CHINANU OKOLI

Unionized core faculty members at Lesley University started a two-day strike Tuesday at 1 p.m., after nearly two years of unsuccessful negotiations.

A bargaining committee representing 82 core faculty members failed to reach an agreement with administrators on Monday. The committee spent 15 hours Monday trying to reach an agreement with administrators, only ending their bargaining meeting at 3:00 a.m. Tuesday.

“What I’m feeling right now is a sense of pride and excitement,” said Kelvin Ramirez, associate professor in Lesley’s expressive therapies division, who spoke with Cambridge Day on Tuesday. “Our faculty is speaking in a clear, unified voice ... I’m excited to really get to a resolution and secure a strong contract for the faculty.”

Lesley sent a note to students saying that classes would not be canceled. “We understand that you may have received conflicting messages about whether your scheduled classes will or will not be held. To be clear, classes will be held while some faculty are on strike today (Tuesday) and tomorrow (Wednesday).”

However, students contacted said that only some classes were held. Jay Rowell, a junior at Lesley, said they had class today but it was a class taught by the dean of students, an administrator.

A strike first appeared on the table on April 16, when an overwhelming majority of the faculty members, represented by SEIU Local 509, voted to authorize it. Faculty members are demanding fair compensation, manageable workloads and a successorship clause that would ensure their union contract remains in place should Lesley close or be acquired.

The strike comes less than a week after Janet Steinmayer announced her departure from her position as Lesley University president. Her tenure, which officially ends June 30, has come with much controversy over her handling of a \$10 million bud-

get gap – this saw some smaller programs eliminated and faculty and staff laid off. Since taking office in 2019, faculty members have passed three votes of no confidence against Steinmayer.

Ramirez said a two-day strike was chosen to illustrate the faculty’s level of commitment.

“We don’t want to get into a situation where both parties are frustrated with each other,” Ramirez said. “I think that there is some level of desire to resolve this for the benefit of the university and while there’s still some distance in wages and manageable workload, I’m confident that this two-day strike will demonstrate our commitment to the administration.”

SEIU Local 509 has also filed five unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board, asserting violations of the National Labor Relations Act, which requires employers to bargain in good faith with unions and protects workplace democracy for employees at private-sector workplaces. The five charges were filed because Lesley has made numerous changes to working conditions without bargaining, according to Natalia Berthet Garcia, communications director of SEIU Local 509. The charges include a unilateral reduction of administrative units, eliminated rank titles for temporary core faculty and changes to the cap of students enrolled in individual courses, Berthet Garcia said.

Local and state elected officials, including Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, State Sen. Patricia Jehlen, and State Representatives Marjorie Decker, Mike Connolly, Steve Owens and Dan Ryan signed and sent a letter to Lesley administrators Tuesday, urging them to “reach a fair and equitable resolution to their ongoing contract negotiations” and “address their current salary, workload, and job security challenges,” according to a press release.

Ramirez said that while it is hard to anticipate how administrators will respond to the strike,

he’s hopeful that he and his colleagues can reach a fair contract so long as administrators are willing to agree.

“It’s up to Lesley’s administration to come to the table and meet our demands,” he said. “We’re not asking for anything that’s unreasonable.”

Other Cambridge campuses are also facing labor unrest. Harvard’s graduate students went on strike last Tuesday, an effort that is ongoing. The Harvard Crimson reported Tuesday that Harvard had made an offer to increase wages and add certain benefits. Harvard’s offer does not address increased security for non-citizen workers, a key demand by the Union.

“People are fighting for a contract because they face challenges regarding research funding, immigration security, and even basic workplace protections,” said Evan MacKay, former president of the HGSU union who is running against Decker for state representative. MacKay added “I’ve had colleagues turn down major talks abroad, even chances to see family, because they weren’t sure they’d be let back into the country. We need Harvard to commit to standing up to protect our students and workers in these cases.”

At MIT, graduate students will see their contract expire at the end of May. Negotiations for a new contract started Thursday. MIT students, who are part of United Electrical Workers Local 256 – MIT Graduate Student Union, are seeking higher wages, funding security, and expanded protections for international workers. The president of MIT’s union, Lauren Chua, a PhD candidate, said in a statement that MIT’s leadership had been slow to start negotiations. “They are sending us the message that they don’t care if we don’t get a raise in June, they don’t care if international grad workers don’t have adequate protections in this political climate,” Chua said.

Jennifer Chen and Jane Petersen contributed to this story.

City of Cambridge proposes first billion-dollar budget



Derek Kouyoumjian

Taha Jennings, budget director for Cambridge.

By JANE PETERSEN

Cambridge is on track to be the second city in Massachusetts with a billion-dollar budget, after City Manager Yi-An Huang submitted his office’s proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2027 at Monday’s City Council meeting. The next fiscal year begins July 1.

The proposed budget of \$1.03 billion, if approved, would be the first time Cambridge crack \$1 billion in a fiscal year. Boston is currently the only city in the state with a budget above \$1 billion.

Cambridge faces revenue concerns and last year asked city departments to cut costs by 2.1 percent. The proposed budget nonetheless preserves key city services.

Overall, the city plans to increase its operating expenses by four percent from last year, driven by moderate increases in spending on staff wages and schools. On Monday, the City Council voted to pass the budget to a second reading and transfer it to the finance committee, which will have hearings starting next week before it can be fully adopted.

Establishing the exact commercial and property tax rates will come in September, after the state certifies property values over the summer. But the city did cost out the exact amount it will need to raise in total tax revenue, with a planned total increase of 6.9 percent.

City Budget Director Taha Jennings spoke to the “challenging economic and political environment,” that dominated thinking about next year’s budget.

“This is really highlighted by falling commercial values, decrease in development activity, weakening economic trends, and increased uncertainty, especially due to federal actions and policies,” Jennings said.

Property taxes have become an increasingly larger share of the city’s revenue – increasing from 64 percent in FY 2022 to 70 percent in the proposal for FY 2027. Taxes have been used to cover stagnant revenues from fees and

revenues raised by departments, but it’s the “miscellaneous revenue” category, including things like interest earnings and reimbursements from the state, that’s taken the biggest hit, decreasing from \$83 million to a projected \$56 million in just two years.

Major line items reflect city council priorities: the city plans to spend over \$51 million on affordable housing, which includes plans to develop social housing. The other two priorities City Manager Yi-An Huang said were most important to council in an interview earlier this month were also costed out: about \$16 million for homelessness and housing stability, and \$5 million to explore early childcare options for Cambridge kids too young for the Universal Pre-K program.

Huang said the city has made efforts to make the budgeting process more transparent than years past. New developments include sharing salaries of part-time workers and producing an interactive website for residents to explore line items.

Despite the higher dollar value of the budget, Huang said the city had worked hard to find savings at the central administrative and department levels. At Monday’s meeting, he said increased efficiency “has helped us ensure that we are minimizing tax increases during an economic downturn.”

He added that Cambridge is “also preserving the ability for us to make the important investments that we know our community needs.”

Councillor Patty Nolan, who co-chairs the finance committee, lauded city staff responsible for putting the budget together. She noted Cambridge has been able to increase its budget in a time when many other municipalities are making cuts.

“We are not facing a deficit for this year and having to change things midstream, which many cities in the Commonwealth are,” Nolan said. She said city staff “have worked really hard to continue our growth, and at the same time ... imposing some kind of fiscal discipline.”

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

BUSINESS

Somerville artist builds platform to simplify art business

By SANGMIN SONG

For many artists, the work does not end with a finished painting or print. Much of their time goes into tracking sales, communicating with contacts and handling the management behind their art.

For many, that work can feel like running a small business. Beyond creating, artists need to use a mix of tools like spreadsheets, website builders and accounting software. Sometimes they spend as much time behind a screen as in the studio.

That is the problem Somerville artist Liv Cappello set out to solve. A painter and web developer, Cappello built Gesso, a platform launching May 1 that combines tools for managing artwork, tracking sales and maintaining a portfolio website in one place. Though platforms for managing artwork and sales exist, many are designed for galleries and larger operations, or require artists to piece together multiple tools.

“It’s a ton more admin work than people might think,” Cappello said. “It’s a lot about tracking your art, making sure your pricing adds up and it’s consistent, collecting email lists, managing contacts and relationships and tracking pricing expenses, all of that.”

As Cappello became more serious about her art practice, she said she realized how difficult it was to manage the administrative work across multiple systems and decided to build a single platform to handle those tasks.

“I was paying to host my website on Squarespace and use the commerce tool for that ... tracking my sales and expenses in a different spreadsheet [and] QuickBooks for other things,” she said. “The subscription costs really started adding up, so I got sick of dealing with all of that.”

Cappello began by building a simple website for her work, then expanded it to bring different parts of her practice into one system. And the challenges she faced were not unique to her.



Liv Cappello, a Somerville artist and creator of Gesso, developed the platform to help artists spend less time on administrative work and more time creating.

“For people in the arts, there could possibly be a perception that being an artist just means you’re painting every day and that’s it,” said Julia Emiliani, a Somerville illustrator who was a beta tester of Gesso. “It’s not really the case, it’s just a fraction of what you do. A lot of it is not as glamorous, behind-the-scenes work that’s a lot to manage.”

Emiliani, who has been practicing art for 11 years and works as a full-time illustrator and designer, said tools like Gesso could help ease that balance by reducing the time spent on administrative work.

“Every artist probably wishes they had more time to make the work, because that’s why you get into it,” Emiliani said. “Obviously, you don’t get into it to calculate prices and send emails. You like to paint, you like to draw.”

As Cappello developed the platform, she gathered feedback from a group of 14 artists including Emiliani to refine its features.

“I set up a system for testers where they can submit feedback through the platform whenever,” she said. “I’ve had about 30 or 40 different comments and features that I’ve kind of tweaked because of that.”

That feedback helped expand the platform beyond Cappello’s own experience as a painter. Suggestions from beta testers led to new features, including tools to track freelance illustration work, manage class offerings and create templates for common communications with clients and collectors.

“There are only so many things I can do based on my practice, because this is built out of something that was a direct response to my needs,” Cappello said. “[Having] other people’s perspectives and their different practices, that’s kind of been what’s so valuable.”

Faye Dupras, a Somerville filmmaker and puppeteer, said the platform brings together tools artists often use separately in a more cost-effective way. She said its design also makes it accessible to artists with different levels of familiarity with technology.

“The way it organizes information is very user-friendly, and I think that’s important for artists,” she said. “You might have a more senior artist who is really strong in their craft but not as comfortable navigating online platforms, and [Liv is] making it so they can still use it.”

Cappello said after she launches Gesso she will introduce it to other artists in the community facing similar challenges. She said the goal is to make that process easier so artists can focus more on creating.

“It’s scary to put something into the world that I’ve worked really hard on, but I think it could be a really helpful tool for people [so] I’m really excited,” she said. “It’s kind of like sending your kid off to college.”

This story is part of a partnership between Cambridge Day and the Boston University Department of Journalism.

Copper Mill

From Page 1

Flynn also said he wanted to find a way move past what he called “the purgatory we’ve been in for many years.”

Since the designs were unveiled, reactions have been mixed, said Christopher Beland, vice president of the Davis Square Neighborhood Council (DSNC). Some residents have raised questions about what kind of shadows the new shapes will cast and how they will affect wind patterns in the area. Beland said Flynn told the DSNC Board that the project’s architect is working on shadow studies. Beland has also heard positive feedback regarding the new designs’ use of red brick, which he called “quintessentially Davis.”

On Monday, before the designs were released, Beland said the DSNC board discussed the possibility of lower tower heights with Flynn. Options discussed included 13- or 15-story structures built in an L or U shape, which would still include roughly 500 units. Flynn didn’t bite, Beland said, and he noted that residents who support a dense tower are generally opposed, as well. Flynn did not respond to a request for comment.

For some residents, there’s been enough debate. “This is as good as offers get, and we might yet let it slip away in a fight over the ‘neighborhood character’ of a fading, dilapidated square, and the aesthetics of the front brick,” said Mike Leukam, a homeowner in the Davis Square area.

The Copper Mill statement noted that the podiums and the pedestrian areas were redesigned to feature masonry and brick, “as requested by the community.” MassHousing’s permit review of the project had been paused in part to consider whether the project fit the context of the neighborhood.

In the statement, Flynn said his goal was to create transit-oriented housing (the project does not include parking), including affordable units, built by union construction labor. He said he would strive to keep existing retail tenants in the buildings the project will replace. It also will have rent-free retail spaces for small business owners.

Copper Mill has opened a development office at 235 Elm Street for people to come in and review the project in depth.

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EVENTS AHEAD

Thursday, May 14, 6 and 9:15 p.m.
The Rockwell, 255 Elm St., Somerville.

Boston Fringe Festival presents Uncle Yak and his Magic Comeback

\$15. Comedy magician Uncle Yak returns to the stage after years of PTA meetings and office coffee pods. His new PG-13 show is a celebration of chance, persistence and the joy of the unexpected.

Sunday, May 3, 11 a.m.
The Burren, 247 Elm St., Somerville.

Matt Heaton’s Burren Boogie: Family Music

\$12. Matt Heaton's songs blend mid-century American guitar styles: surf, rockabilly, western swing and soul, delivered with a wry sense of humor and a sincere sense of fun. For adults and children alike.

Wednesday, May 6, 8 p.m.
The Sinclair, 52 Church St., Cambridge.

Singer-songwriter Hasan Raheem

\$145. Hasan Raheem is a Pakistani singer, songwriter and rapper, known for his laid-back R&B and hip-hop lyrics.

Tuesday, May 12, 6 p.m.
Brattle Theatre, 40 Brattle St., Cambridge.

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and Heather Cox Richardson in conversation about “Backtalker: An American Memoir”

\$12. Cofounder and executive director of the African American Policy Forum, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw's memoir traces the way her lived experience made her see things others didn't as the daughter of a strong-minded teacher and a pathbreaking public servant by questioning the ideas of racism and gender. Boston College's Heather Cox Richardson joins.

Wednesday, May 6, 7:30 p.m.
The Comedy Studio, 5 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge.

Rising Stars Showcase with host Pat Lacey

\$24 and 18-plus. Catch a lineup of Boston's rising stars and future headliners delivering a night of laughs.

Thursday, May 14, 7 p.m.
Regattabar, 1 Bennett St., Cambridge.

Keyon Harrold performs

\$36 to \$48. Presented in partnership with the Boston Jazz Foundation, this trumpeter has toured and recorded with Jay-Z and Cirque Du Soleil and has written the theme song for “The Queen Latifah's Show.”

Sunday, May 3, 2:30 p.m.
Cambridge Main Library, 449 Broadway, Cambridge.

World Portuguese Language Day

Free. An afternoon of celebration with the music of Portugal, Cape Verde and Brazil, fol-lowed by light refreshments. Performers at the event include Mia Tomé, accompanied by Zé Manel Cavaco from Portugal; Vuca Pinheiro from Cape Verde; and the Trio Alma Brasileira from Brazil.

Monday, May 11, 6 p.m.

Alvin E. Roth explains “Moral Economics: From Prostitution to Organ Sales, What Controversial Transactions Reveal About How Markets Work”

Free. Nobel Prize– winning economist Alvin E. Roth examines how moral arguments (such as abortion and marijuana) can be discussed and perhaps solved if we view them as markets—tools to help decide who gets what—and understand how those markets can be fine-tuned to be more functional. Boston University's Ray Fisman joins.

Club Passim, 47 Palmer St., Cambridge.

Tuesday, May 5, 8 p.m.

Joe Pernice performs

\$35 to \$40. Drawing from folk, power pop and chamber pop traditions, Joe Pernice has collaborated with a range of musicians including Norman Blake (Teenage Fanclub), Joshua Karp, Neko Case, Aimee Mann and Jimmy Webb. His latest album is “Sunny, I Was Wrong.” Also performing on Wednesday, May 6.

Sunday, May 10, 7 p.m.

20th Anniversary Show: Porch Party Mamas

\$33 to \$35. This Boston-area trio—consisting of Felicia Brady-Lopez (vocals, piano and accordion), Ksenia Mack (vocals, guitar and banjo) and Katrin Peterson (vocals, percussion and piano)—performs a blend of folk, country and blues music.

Harvard Art Museums, 32 Quincy St., and Adolphus Busch Hall, 29 Kirkland St.

Saturday, May 2, 1 to 5 p.m.

Harvard Arts Fest 2026

Free. An afternoon of student and Harvard community performances in a wide variety of styles, including a cappella, dance, music, theater and more. Performances take place in the Calderwood Courtyard and Adolphus Busch Hall.

Wednesday, May 13, 12:30 to 1 p.m.

Gallery Talk: New on View: Bodhidharma

Free. Join assistant curator Yan Yang for a talk about a sixth century monk named Bodhidharma who traveled through central Asia to China and established the Chan sect of Buddhism to become an icon in Buddhist art.

Saturday, May 9, Noon to 4 p.m. and 4:30 to 8:30 p.m.
The Foundry, 101 Rogers St., Cambridge.

Boston Hot Sauce Festival

Free to \$50. Experience the lineup of global hot sauces crafted by small and local businesses, spicy food challenges, pepper farmers, cooking demos at the Spicy Food Lab, Pepper Chats with industry experts. Families can explore hands-on activities like face painting and henna art.

Lilypad, 1353 Cambridge St., Cambridge

Monday, May 4, 10 p.m.

The Fringe performs

\$15. Originally formed in 1971 by tenor-saxophonist George Garzone, bassist Richard Ap-pleman and drummer Bob Gullotti as an outlet for their free jazz improvisations, the band is still performing after 50 years. The current line-up includes George Garzone, tenor saxo- phone; John Lockwood, bass; and Francisco Mela, drums.

Friday, May 8, 8 to 9:30 p.m.

Ornithology: A Comedy Variety Show with Live Music

\$15 to \$20. This stand-up comedy show includes a lineup of Boston comedians and musicians.



■ 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.

WILD THINGS



Boston Public Library
People spearing dormant eels overwintering in the mud of the Mill Pond (today Boston's Back Bay), circa 1851.

their skin, their bodies are covered in a mucus layer, which makes them difficult to hold onto.

American eels breathe through gills like other fish, but they can also absorb oxygen through their skin for short periods. This allows eels to travel over wet grass or mud when looking for a suitable habitat.

Glass eels are illegal to harvest, except in South Carolina and Maine. (In Maine, a pound of glass eels can sell for more than \$2,000, although in 2025 they were worth \$895 per pound.) Indeed, the glass eel trade is so profitable that glass eels are said to be more valuable than their weight in heroin.

People have never successfully bred eels in captivity.

Although eels are not pretty, they connect ocean ecosystems with

The lowly eel merits our high praise

By JEANINE FARLEY

In part one of this two-part series on eels, I noted that despite our centuries-long relationship with them, some parts of these creatures' lives remain a mystery.

What's clear is their impact on our lives: When the Green Line was extended past Boylston Street station after 1913, workers discovered underneath the station prehistoric tidal eel and alewife fish weirs with 65,000 stakes that were estimated to have been put in place 2,000 years earlier. (You can read more about this fish weir at Arlington Street Station itself.) They were important for sustaining the 102 Mayflower colonists and the ship's roughly 30-person crew. Only about half of them survived that first winter on board the ship.

In March, they left the ship and came into contact with Tisquantum, a member of the Patuxet band of the Wampanoag. One of the first things he did was to teach the passengers and sailors how to capture eels. By late 1621, leader Edward Winslow wrote, "In September we can take a hogshead [a 63-gallon barrel] of eels in a night, with small labor, and can dig them out of their beds all the winter."

They were an important food source for many in the Boston area into the early 1900s.

Sadly, today their population is at historic low levels due to overfishing and habitat loss. Still, eels are common all along the coast of Massachusetts, as well as in ponds and rivers that reach the ocean.

Young eels' flat bodies metamorphose into rodlike glass, something like glass noodles. What were semi-hard structures in their spine and head now turn into bone. Their diges-



Samuel Zhang/samzhang

A cormorant catches an eel, North Shore, June 2025.

tive tract rearranges, and their scent organs enlarge. Once they swim into freshwater rivers, the two- to four-inch eels acquire a grayish pigment, and are called elvers. Weighing about as much as a drop of water, elvers migrate, sometimes hundreds of miles, up our rivers against the current.

In the Mystic River, for example, they travel upriver to the Mystic Lakes Dam, where an eelway was installed in 2012. The elvers swim up a textured ramp into a box. People from the Mystic River Watershed Association monitor the box, count the thousands of eels that show up every year, and transfer them to the upper Mystic Lake. There,



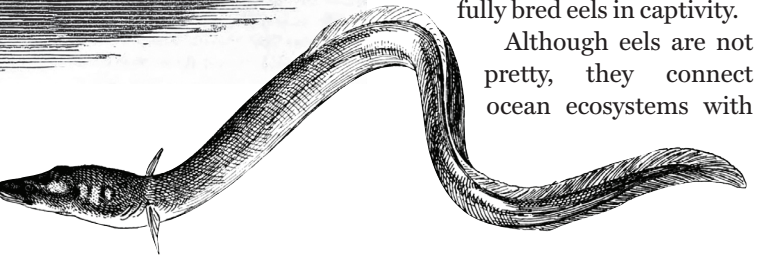
Chris Paparo, @fishguyphotos

A glass eel.

the eels develop into yellow eels, which live in the lake for 5 to 25 years, dining at night on insects, worms, small fish, clams and crabs. They are difficult to spot because they hide beneath rocks and in sediment during the day.

Eventually, female eels can grow to be four feet long and weigh 16 pounds. Males are smaller, usually less than 16 inches. Males reach maturity in about 5 years, but the females take 20 or more years.

In the fall, when it is time to become reproductive adults, the eels stop eating. Their bodies rely on stored fat to produce the energy they need to swim back to their birthplace. They wait for a dark, moonless night, when there are fewer predators, to swim over the top of the Mystic Lakes Dam or through downstream passage gates and migrate the 1,000 miles back to the Sargasso Sea. During this time, they complete another metamorphosis called silvering, transforming into sexually mature fish with reproductive organs. These gray-backed, silver-bellied fish have just one mission — to return to their



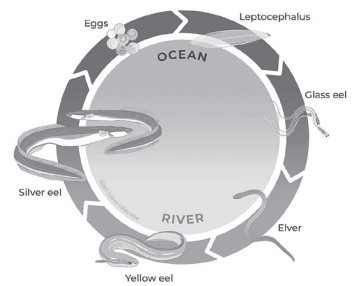
spawning grounds to reproduce.

These silver eels are prepared for life in the ocean: Their eyes grow larger to see in the ocean depths, and their digestive tract degenerates to make way for developing sex organs. Their hearts and lungs enlarge to support their long-distance travels. Females shed calcium and phosphorous from their ribs to provide nutrients for egg production. By the time these females reach their spawning grounds at some unknown location in the Sargasso Sea, their health is rapidly deteriorating. In late winter, the females manage to release as many as 22 million eggs deep underwater. The males expel clouds of sperm to fertilize the eggs. Once fertilized, a small percentage of eggs float to the surface where they hatch into larvae. The adult eels die, paving the way for the new generation to venture out unencumbered by the old brood.

Eel Facts

If you've heard the phrase "slippery as an eel," it's because eels are slippery. Although they have small scales embedded in

freshwater rivers and lakes, essentially fertilizing inland waterways with ocean-derived nutrients. Eels are food for herons, gulls, cormorants, eagles, otters, raccoons, snakes and many other predators. In addition, they are the primary species that help mussels disperse. Adult mussels spread their larvae into water, and as adult eels swim by, the larvae attach themselves to the gills, where they are protected. The mussels then hitchhike upstream with the eels for a few weeks while they metamorphose into juveniles. Then the mussels drop off and settle into the sediment to grow into adults.



Courtesy of the National Estuarine Research Reserve Science Collaborative
The life cycle of the American eel.



Chris Scott Wildlife Photography

A black-crowned night heron catches a small eel, Martha's Vineyard, July 2025.

FILM & THEATER

LOCAL FOCUS



A scene from "Resurrection," directed by Bi Gan.

Is Bi Gan the greatest director alive?

By OSCAR GOFF

Barbara Kopple should make anyone’s list of most influential documentary filmmakers. A pioneer of the cinema verité style, Kopple used her keen eye to create some of the most stirring political films of the 20th century. On Friday and Saturday, the **Brattle Theatre** screens brand new 4k restorations of two of Kopple’s most celebrated works. In **"Harlan County, USA"** (1976), Kopple follows the coal miners of a small Kentucky town as they strike against their corporate higher-ups. The film is a riveting, at times harrowing work of pro-worker activism in its own right, with some unforgettable images and an infectious soundtrack of politically minded folk tunes (most memorably Florence Reece’s “Which Side Are You On?”). “Harlan” is paired with its spiritual sequel of sorts, **"American Dream"** (1990), in which Kopple documents a year-long walkout strike at the Hormel Foods plant in Austin, Minnesota. In a time when disparity between the corporate and working classes is greater than ever, Kopple’s films remain as relevant as when they were shot.

On Friday, the **Somerville Cine-Club** sets up shop at the **Armory’s Rooted Cafe** with the first of two planned tributes to the timeless comedy of legendary actor/filmmaker Charlie Chaplin. The first program, titled **Chaplin: 1915**, collects five shorts the Little Tramp made for Essanay Films, all projected on rare 8mm or 16mm film prints and accompanied by live scores from local musicians. Chaplin was one of the first true geniuses of the movies, and his films still play like gangbusters to live crowds more than a century on, making this a no-miss event for fans of silent film and comedy.

In just three feature films, 36-year-old Chinese filmmaker Bi Gan has put himself in the conversation for greatest living director. From Saturday through Tuesday, the Brattle presents all three of Bi’s features in **The Cinema of Bi Gan**. On Saturday and Monday, catch Bi’s debut, **"Kaili Blues"** (2016), and its follow-up, **"Long Day’s Journey Into Night"** (2018), the latter of which features a jaw-dropping single-take tracking shot which spans the film’s entire second hour. Sunday and Tuesday bring Bi’s latest masterpiece, **"Resurrection"** (2025), which the Day ranked as the #2 film of 2025. The throughline of Bi’s films is an almost giddy love of the possibilities of film itself, and his images, especially when enjoyed on the big screen, are like nothing else currently out there.

On Monday, the **Harvard Film Archive**

screens two classic arthouse kiddie flicks. **"Little Fugitive"** (1953), which screens in a brand new 35mm print, follows seven-year-old Joey, who, tricked into believing he’s shot and killed his older brother, goes on the lam — and has a great time doing it, taking advantage of all the rides and sights at Coney Island. It’s a delightful, family-friendly work of early independent American film, with some priceless footage of mid-century Brooklyn and wonderful real-kid performances by its two young leads. It’s paired with Albert Lamorisse’s timeless short **"The Red Balloon"** (1956), the near-wordless saga of a young boy and his best friend, who happens to be the titular balloon. Both films retain all of their childlike wonder and would make a perfect introduction to the world of cinema for any young viewer. (Also screening in an encore presentation Sunday May10.)

For those looking for films of a more recent vintage, there are plenty of under-the-radar options. On Monday, the **Somerville Theatre** welcomes doctor-turned-filmmaker Jessica Zitter for a screening of her new film, **"The Chaplain and the Doctor"** (2025), about her own unlikely friendship with hospital chaplain Betty Clark, followed by a live Q&A. On Tuesday, the Somerville hosts the local premiere of **"Crushing Wheelchairs"** (2025), a unique independent social justice thriller created by the folks at POOR Magazine, a California artists’ collective of unhoused and formerly unhoused people. And on Wednesday, the great **Grrl Haus Cinema** comes home to the Brattle with not one but two programs featuring some of the curators’ favorite short films by women, trans, nonbinary, and genderqueer artists. It’s all more proof that, if you’re only seeing movies at AMC, you’re only seeing a fraction of what’s happening in cinema.

On Thursday, the Somerville Theatre begins its latest repertory series. **Thirsty Thursdays** is a weekly salute to some of the greatest watering holes in cinema, from the grimmest dive bars to the glitziest night spots. The series kicks off, appropriately enough, with a 35mm **"Cocktail"** (1988), the gloriously bone-headed retro classic starring Tom Cruise at the peak of his early movie star powers. Cruise plays Brian, a would-be yuppie who discovers he has a knack for mixing drinks — and, more importantly, looking good while he does it. Is there much depth beneath the film’s shimmering ’80s exterior? Perhaps not, but its dazzling behind-the-bar choreography, and Cruise’s absurd levels of charisma, will keep you bellying up for more.

REVIEWS

“Mother Mary”



A scene from "Mother Mary."

David Lowery is the director who took a sheet with two holes in it and made a pretty compelling love story with Rooney Mara and Casey Affleck as a couple separated by life and death. That DIY movie, “A Ghost Story” (2017), cost a mere \$100,000, unthinkable for something of that caliber in this day and age. His latest, “Mother Mary,” likely cost at least 50 times that (A24, the plucky studio behind it, hasn’t released financial details at this time). This film also centers on a piece of fabric with supernatural properties, a red sartorial adornment providing a terrifying physical incarnation of a friendship gone bad.

Sam (Michaela Coel, “I Will Destroy You” and currently also onscreen in “Two Christophers”) is a famous fashion designer prepping for a big show. Mother Mary (Anne Hathaway, soon to also be on two screens in the same cineplex when “The Devil Wears Prada 2” opens) is a pop star in the vein of Lady Gaga, who for reasons of personal trauma has been on a self-imposed hiatus. For her comeback tour she wants Sam to design her costumes, but they haven’t spoken in years. Mother Mary (we never get her birth name) drives her Range Rover through a downpour to Sam’s country estate and in essence, crashes the fash-

ion planning session. What happens from there is a self-guided therapy session between the pair, propelled by veiled, trite accusations. All the action in “Mother Mary” takes place at Sam’s rustic retreat, and with such strong leads, at times feels like it could have been better suited for the stage.

Lowery, so adroit at blending reality, dream and the in-between in “The Green Knight” (2021), registers some trippy scenes of the supernatural that resonate and haunt through the power of sensual immersion. The flashback sequences impress as well. Hathaway is toned and cut (allegedly she worked for two years on getting into dance shape). A lot is asked of her both physically and emotionally, and she’s game, but the superficiality of the script undermines what could be stronger performances. The reasons to see “Mother Mary” are Lowery’s all-consuming dreamscapes, Hathaway’s fierce physicality and Coel’s alluring countenance that becomes a frame-filling wonderment. — TOM MEEK



Playing at Apple Cinemas Cambridge, Kendall Square Cinema and AMC Assembly Row 12

“I Swear”

This palpably moving depiction of the real-world travails of a young, misunderstood Scottish man with Tourette’s syndrome should be must-see, especially for those at the highest level of government who have taken to mocking such people. The title refers to the condition that afflicts John Davidson, causing him to spout out racially and sexually offensive barbs (if you saw the clip from the BAFTA awards, you have a strong idea). They occasionally punch walls, the person next to them or even a dog minding its own business. Growing up with humble means and a frustrated mother (Shirley Henson) who can’t deal, Davidson, bullied relentlessly as a child (played superbly by Scott Ellis Watson), finds a glimmer of hope as a young man (Robert Aramay, in a break-through performance) when a mental health worker (Maxine Peake) takes him in and nurtures his calm side. From there, John gets a job as a caretaker at a community center (alongside the always great and gruff Pete Mulan), and, as he finds a shelf in life, advocates for young people struggling with what he went through.

Directed with care by Kirk Jones (“Nanny McPhee,” “Waking Ned Devine”), warmth and a necessary layer of honest grit, “I Swear” is most assuredly not your typical feel-good heart-string-



A scene from "I Swear."

tugger. I’m not sure how Aramay got so into character — the tics and outbursts feel so sudden and real. For validation, wait for the credits that show some of the footage from the 1989 BBC documentary “Mad John,” and you’ll be astonished at how absolutely dead-on Aramay is. At its core, “I Swear” not only puts a lens on the plight of those who are neurodiverse, it’s also about acceptance, tolerance and understanding. Onscreen one of the funnier, funny-not scenes has John confronted by police and shouts out, “I’m carrying drugs.” IRL, besides that BAFTA tic, when John receive an honor (Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) from the Queen, he purportedly barked, “F*** the Queen.” If only John could land an invite to the White House.

— TOM MEEK



Playing at Apple Cinemas Cambridge

■ Do you know of a restaurant opening or closing in Cambridge or Somerville, or do you have other food news tips? Send them to business@cambridgeday.com.



Nile Scott Studios

A scene from "The Moderate" during production at Central Square Theater.

Several Cambridge theater companies nab Norton nods

By LYNNE WEISS

Central Square Theater received 10 nominations for the annual Elliot Norton Awards for its plays “The Moderate” and “Silent Sky,” twice as many as any other Cambridge theater. Moonbox Productions won five nominations for “Crowns,” and the American Repertory Theater received a nomination for “Wonder” and an award for “Two Strangers (Carry a Cake Across New York),” the Boston Theater Critics Association (BTCA) announced earlier this month.

The winners will be announced June 1 at the Huntington Theatre. The Norton awards were created to honor artists who have made outstanding contributions to professional theater in Boston and beyond. The BTCA announced nearly 150 nominations and awards across the region.

“The Moderate” depicts the life of a social media content moderator tasked with viewing material flagged as pornographic, racist, or violent. The play, praised for excellent performances as well as unique staging, was nominated for Outstanding New Script (Ken Urban) and Outstanding Ensemble. It also received nominations for Outstanding Play, Outstanding Director (Jared Mezzocchi), Outstanding Lead (Nael Nacer), and Outstanding Featured Performance (Jules Talbot) in the midsize category.

“The Moderate” was also nominated for Outstanding Sound Design, Outstanding Scenic Design, and Outstanding Lighting in the midsize or small category. The theater’s “Silent Sky,” a fictionalized biography of astronomer Henrietta Leavitt, was also nominated for Outstanding Lighting Design in the midsize or small category. Both “The Moderate” and “Silent Sky” were Catalyst Collaborative@MIT Productions

presented by Central Square Theater.

Moonbox Productions received multiple nominations, including Outstanding Ensemble, Outstanding Musical, and Outstanding Music Direction, for “Crowns.” The musical, which celebrates the women who form the backbone of the traditional Black church, was also nominated in the midsize category for Outstanding Director (Regine Vital) and for Outstanding Costume Design for midsize or small theaters.

American Repertory Theater was nominated in the large theater category for Outstanding Lighting Design for “Wonder,” the story of a boy with a facial difference and the community that supports him. Sam Tutty, the lead in A.R.T.’s visiting musical, “Two Strangers,” also received the award for Outstanding Performance in a Visiting Musical. (Visiting awardees are announced at the same time as nominations in other categories.)

The Norton awards were created upon the 1983 retirement of beloved and influential Boston critic Elliot Norton. Norton, who died in 2003 at the age of 100, was known as the dean of American theater critics and won a special Tony Award in 1971 for “distinguished theatrical commentary.”

The BTCA currently consists of 11 volunteers who review for local and national outlets such as The Boston Globe, GBH, WBUR, Broadway World, Theater Mirror, Stage and Cinema, and other online, broadcast, and print outlets, including Cambridge Day (disclosure: the author of this story is a member of the BTCA). The BTCA considered more than 90 productions for the 43rd awards season. Tickets for the June 1 Elliot Norton Awards ceremony (early bird pricing through May 18) are available at bostontheaterscene.com.

CULTURE

An Irish diddly in Inman Square



Billy Ray Hawkins II

Joey Nowd, front, playing guitar with Phoenix Campagnuolo on bass. On the far right by the speaker is Matthew Golub.

By DIANA LU

Anyone willing to play a tune is welcome to Music Mondays at An Sabin, an Irish bar in Inman Square. And so they come, men and women, young and old, in collared shirts, tattoo collars or drag makeup. They trickle in around the 6 p.m. start time, settle into chairs and listen as a featured act performs in a corner by the window. Soon the set will shift from performance to possibility.

Guitarists, accordionists, vocalists, even complete newcomers to playing live drift on and off stage. More often than not, performers from different backgrounds end up jamming, making friends, and forming new collaborations.

Music Mondays was started in 2024 by Phoebe Angle, a local standup comedian and event organizer. “I want the arts to succeed and I want people to be happy,” she said. Her format – a booked show with an open mic – was shaped as much by logistics as by philosophy. Early Monday evenings allow musicians and restaurant workers to participate, while giving neighbors a place to stop after work. That timing also makes it accessible for people with families or early commutes the next day.

“I hoped that it would meld into a fun meeting of minds for people in different industries, a rare thing in a city often segregated by class and trade,” Angle said. The idea was inspired by time she spent in Ireland. “At bars in Ireland, they have events called “diddlys” where local musicians play traditional Irish music. Other people often arrive with instruments to join the booked act,” Angle said.

The event she hosts at An Sabin is not focused on traditional Irish music. But, she said, “it is very much in the spirit of that Irish music culture. I really wanted to create a community who feel

comfortable to join each other and support all levels of skill. Some regulars started very new to music and are now playing with 40-year veterans, getting advice from them, joining them at different venues.”

Angle’s combination of a booked show with an open mic started out as a sporadic event, before evolving into a weekly hub for musical exploration. Hosted by musicians Matthew Golub and Tim Carey alongside Angle, it has quietly reshaped a corner of



Phoebe Angle

The duo of Bridget Nault, who plays accordion, and Freddy Badger on the banjo performed at a recent Music Monday at An Sabin.

Cambridge’s music scene.

“What makes An Sabin’s show unique is it’s really focused on the people already in the neighborhood and part of the community,” said Klaus Dukes, a former employee of Inman Square Wine and Liquor and one of the first featured acts booked. He returns regularly to join in the jam.

That sense of accessibility has incubated local talent and unexpected collaborations. One regular, Nate Rogers, has turned from Inman neighbor to city-wide celebrity. “He started here and now plays all over town. He’s very recognizable, everybody knows “Tall Nate,”” said Cal Senn Cadotte, An Sabin’s co-owner.

The diddly also produced the intergenerational, interracial duo Deadwater Siren, singer Sirena Wanders and guitarist Bryan Murphy. Murphy has a decades-long music resume, while Wanders had a corporate

job with a side gig as a burlesque performer. She first came to the diddly as a bar patron, where she met Murphy.

“An Sabin is so encouraging in the way that it is set up,” said Wanders. “The bartenders really encouraged me [to sing].” Wanders and Murphy listened to and respected each other’s craft and later connected to collaborate professionally over Instagram.

Murphy, too, noted how unusual this environment can be. “It started small, which is key,” he said. “For somebody who’s been playing in bands for a really long time, it’s refreshing.”

The communal ethos is enhanced by the commitment of the hosts. “I’ve been to about 20 open mics in greater Boston,” said Golub. “More than anywhere else in the city, I feel An Sabin is building a community, and I really wanted to be part of that.”

Golub and Carey bring different backgrounds to the stage. Carey is a seasoned older musician, while Golub is a younger Berklee-trained player. When their crowds overlap, Angle said, unexpected combinations emerge across experience levels and genres.

Behind the scenes, the model depends on the bar’s commitment to keeping the space available. At a time when many music venues have closed or scaled back live programming, often due to square footage constraints or financial pressure, that support is a rare gift.

“It’s all thanks to the bar wanting it there,” Angle said. “It’s not a huge money maker, but it does make the bar and the neighborhood cooler.”

Senn Cadotte is direct about his commitment. “I’m proud to be creating community and proud to host,” he said. “My hope is for this event to become a hub for forming local staple bands. Who knows, maybe the next Bob Dylan starts here,” he added with a smile.

BOOKS

Tom Perrotta’s ‘Ghost Town’ confronts specters of 1970s suburbia

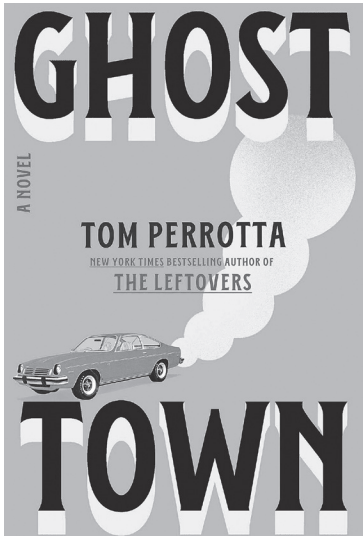
By AMY ROEDER

“Ghost Town,” by Tom Perrotta, Simon & Schuster, 2026.

In early 1970s New Jersey, tragedy afflicts 13-year-old Jimmy Perrini’s world. Over the decades that ensue, he becomes Jay Perry, a successful writer who keeps his childhood trauma safely locked away from his readers and himself. Or so he believes. As Tom Perrotta writes in his new novel “Ghost Town,” Jay’s childhood is full of ghosts that won’t stay quiet. He ultimately realizes that the only way to heal is to confront them — even the creepy one that lurked in the back seat of an old Chevy Vega.

Most of the novel is told through flashbacks to a few fateful months in Jimmy’s life, as Perrotta evokes a bygone industrial suburbia with an unsentimental nostalgia tinged by melancholy. He notes that Jimmy’s fictional hometown, Creamwood, is arrayed with houses that look the same and that are peopled by white families who do and like the same things. Jimmy blends in, until grief alienates him from the social order. As he drifts through his summer, pulling away from his friends, he begins to perceive things he never used to notice, such as the racist behavior of a teacher, and identifies with the town’s outcasts.

He meets Eddie, a burnout who spends most of his time driving aimlessly in a car inherited from a relative with a shady past. He also meets Olivia, a beautiful, troubled valedictorian with a Ouija board. Through these rela-



The cover art for Tom Perrotta’s “Ghost Town.”

tionships, Jimmy is thrust prematurely into adult situations. He finds himself unexpectedly encountering what seem to be literal ghosts along the way — along with bigger questions around racism and war that continue to haunt society.

Events unfold with the slow, hazy time warp of summer vacation. Jimmy plays baseball and volunteers with younger kids at the Rec Center. He buys weed at a McDonald’s and comes close to losing his virginity. His chapters are told in third person and feel like pages in an old album full of Polaroids.

We return to Jay in the present day only a few times in the book. The transition to brisk first-person narration in these chapters can feel abrupt, but it’s an effective device to show how much he’s changed. Jay is no longer the dreamy kid he used to be, but while he’s successful, he’s unfulfilled. He’s made a fortune off a series of “Ghost Teacher” books

for kids, but he has avoided writing about his own ghosts. Then he accepts an invitation to give a reading at an event honoring his late father. Reluctantly, he decides the time has come to tell his story — which we ultimately come to understand is what we’re getting in the Jimmy chapters.

Even though we’re deep in Jimmy’s point of view in these chapters, it is at times apparent that we’re seeing his story filtered through 60-something Jay’s memories. For example, Jimmy’s maybe-girlfriend and his best friend, who may be seeing her on the sly, play only slight walk-on roles. While Jimmy would likely have been obsessed with them, Jay knows that they really weren’t that important in the grand scheme of his life. And he acknowledges that his telling of a climactic moment in Jimmy’s story may be unreliable.

“Ghost Town” is a slow burn, not recommended for anyone looking for a page-turning thriller. But Perrotta’s clean, economical prose does a lot of work below the surface. His mother died while he was writing the book, and it shows. Jimmy’s struggles with grief — blended as they are with disillusionment and typical adolescent struggles — feel deeply relatable.

And Perrotta’s ghosts are vividly described and haunting presences that leave a mark, whether or not we believe they are real or manifestations of Jimmy’s trauma.

Perrotta is a master craftsman. If, like me, it’s your first encounter with him, just know you’ll be seeking more of his writing.

Perrotta

From Page 1

When Jimmy’s cousin marries a light-skinned Black woman, where Creamwood — like Perrotta’s Garwood in the post-Civil Rights 1970s — is predominantly White. “It was all White,” Perrotta said of his hometown, “and it wasn’t just all White by accident. Realtors just wouldn’t show the homes to Black people and then suddenly this Black guy is living in this town where he’s not supposed to be ...and so Jimmy’s story kind of intersects with that story.”

Perrotta, who lives in Belmont, has a page-to-screen sweet spot with such notable cinematic adaptations as “Little Children” (2006) and “Election” (1999), as well as the post-rap-ture TV series, “The Leftovers.”

Perrotta’s dad was a mail carrier and his mother “was a great student and wanted to be a teacher but couldn’t — because she had to work to help the family out,” he said. “But she was very insistent that her kids were going to go to college.”

Perrotta went to Yale then got an MFA in creative writing at Syracuse University. He found his way to Boston, worked McJobs and taught at the Harvard Extension School while writing — and not finding much traction. “I was starting to wonder if I had to rethink my plans,” he said.

In 1994 he published “Bad Haircut,” a collection of short stories, and was subsequently invited to the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference in Vermont where he read from his novel in progress, “The Wishbones.” That story featured an antihero guitarist whose life and career were going sideways. A screenwriter in attendance knew of some producers looking for new material and connected them to Perrotta. “The Wishbones” wasn’t ready, he told them, “but

I also have this other book that’s been sitting in my drawer about a high school election.”

That unpublished manuscript became 1999’s quirky, arty teen romp “Election”, directed by Alexander Payne (“Sideways,” “The Holdovers”) and starring Matthew Broderick and Reese Witherspoon. “They really loved it,” Perrotta said, “and Hollywood was making teen movies back then.”

The film became a hit. “It changed everything,” he said. And all that from a manuscript that had been in a desk drawer for three years. “I remember being on set,” Perrotta chuckled, “and somebody introduced me to Matthew Broderick and said, ‘This is Tom, he wrote the book,’ and Broderick just looked very puzzled and said, ‘There’s a book?’”

(The book version ended up being published before the movie came out.)

Perrotta has now published 11 books, and was a writer and co-creator for the HBO series version of “The Leftovers” and collaborated with Todd Field, the director of “Little Children,” on the film’s script.

Given both where he grew up and that his stories tend to largely deal with troubled men in troubling situations, it’s no surprise that Philip Roth is one of his chief literary influences. Raymond Carver is another who gave Perrotta ballast and inspiration early on, “because he was writing about working-class characters and focused on people’s economic situation.”

As to what’s next, Perrotta is noncommittal but contemplative about the process, “I’ve been rediscovering my life as a fiction writer,” he said, “I think people can be haunted by their conscience and their memories. You don’t really need some objective or external phantom—that’s coming from inside of you.”

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Police learn pepper spray error but bringing in psych help, official

Spicy lobster spaghetti at Geppetto

By Tom Meek September 15, 2025

Is lobster best left pretty much on its tasty own? A strong argument to the contrary is on the menu at Geppetto, Will Gilson's fine Italian concept.

Cambridge's police commissioner says police won't use pepper spray again in a situation like it's shown with a barricade suspect. The suspect was taken into the upper floors of a multifamily building on Broadway and forced out residents.

reading...

Sculptures by Marcus W. Clarke up at Gallery 263 give an irreverent take on American Christianity

By Claire Ogden September 14, 2025

ies and school needs mayoral forum covering s, teen centers and (corrected)

9, 2025

Community View

Photograph by Shao Wei Chew Chia



This photo was taken on the lawn of Cambridge City Hall, as Cambridge YMCA Taichi and members of the community celebrated the arrival of spring and the inaugural International Taijiquan Day on March 21, 2026.



Scan the QR code to submit your photos from around our community.

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SPORTS

CRLS Sports: Boys’ baseball takes three of five

By DAN EISNER

The Cambridge Rindge and Latin baseball team (7-2) continued its best season in years with three wins in five games last week. The Falcons posted a 5-0 shutout of Waltham on April 21 and a 6-0 shutout of Killingly, Conn., on April 22. Against Waltham, Stefan Alexandrov went 2-for-3 with a double and two RBIs. Oliver Henke went 2-for-3 with an RBI. Alexandrov pitched six shutout innings and struck out eight for the win. In the defeat of Killingly, Campbell Callahan went 2-for-3 with a double and two RBIs. Hugo Davis also went 2-for-3 and had a double. Issei Umeki pitched six shutout innings and gave up three hits for the win.

Their first defeat of the season came on Thursday in a 6-5 loss to Wellesley. The Falcons had taken the lead in the top of the seventh inning on an RBI double from Joel Rojas-Cruz and an RBI single from Alexandrov. But Wellesley came back to win on a walkoff hit in the bottom of the seventh.

On Saturday, Cambridge defeated Burlington, 8-7, in eight innings. The Falcons trailed by three runs entering the seventh, but tied the score on an RBI single from Alexandrov and a two-run single from Callahan. They added two runs in the top of the eighth on a Burlington error and a single by Rojas-Cruz. Callahan earned the win in relief with two shutout innings. On Monday, Cambridge lost to Newton, 7-1.

Boys’ volleyball: The boys’ volleyball team (6-5) defeated St. John’s Prep, 3-0 (25-19, 25-22, 25-17), on April 22 and lost to Lincoln-Sudbury, 0-3 (22-25, 13-25, 15-25), on Tuesday. In the defeat of St. John’s Prep, Brennan

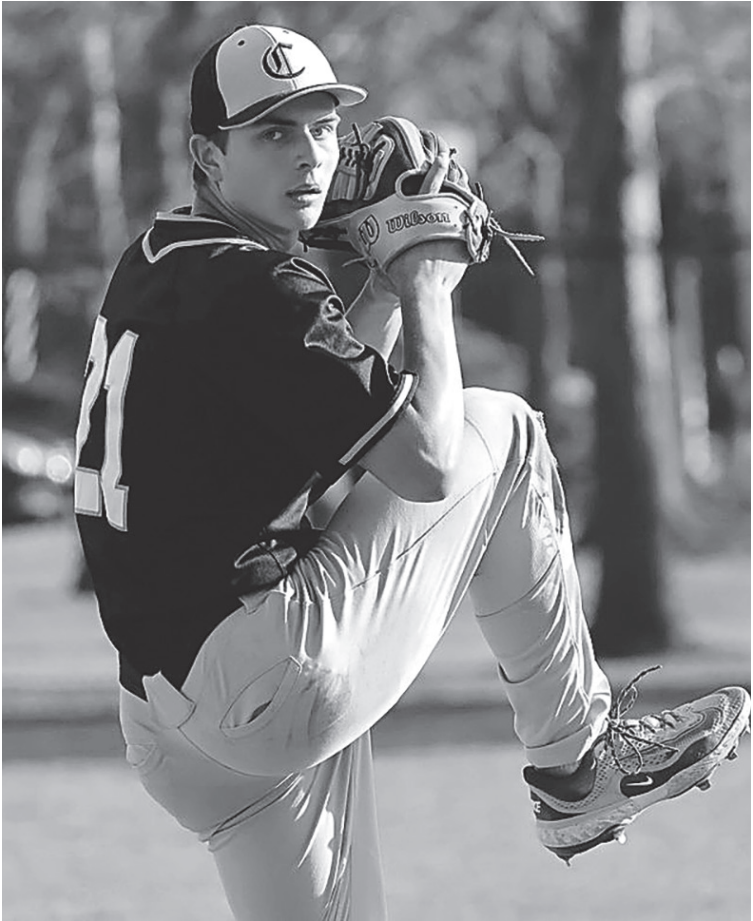


Dan Eisner

Joel Rojas-Cruz takes a swing against Newton on Monday. He delivered big hits in a loss to Wellesley and a defeat of Burlington last week.

Loud led the offense with 16 kills, hitting .571. Will Ochsendorf had 9 kills and hit .444. The team collected a total of eight aces and six blocks. Against Lincoln-Sudbury, Loud led the offense with 8 kills, while Ochsendorf added 6 kills and 2 stuff blocks and Eric Ohanyan contributed 5 kills.

Tennis: The boys’ and girls’ tennis teams both lost their matches on Monday to Newton South, 0-5.



Rich Beyer

Oliver Henke in a game earlier this season.

ADVERTISEMENT

Death notice
Adelson Dort



It is with profound sorrow that the family of Adelson “Eli” Dort announces his passing. Adelson was born May 30, 1974, in Desdunes, Haiti and passed away April 23, 2024, at the age of 49. He attended elementary and middle school in Gonaïves, Haiti. At the age of 14, he immigrated to Cambridge. As the firstborn child, Adelson held a uniquely cherished place within his family. He became the first in his family to graduate from college. He started at University of Massachusetts Boston, playing forward on the men’s soccer team. He transferred to Bryant University and earned a bachelor’s degree in finance. This academic milestone marked a defining moment not only in his life, but in the lives of his family members, setting a standard of achievement grounded in discipline, perseverance, and self-belief. His academic and professional accomplishments became a source of pride and inspiration to those who came after him.

Beyond his achievements, Adelson was deeply loved as a son, brother, grandson, nephew, cousin and friend. He was a lifelong role model whose presence shaped the trajectory of his siblings’ lives. His loved ones witnessed his growth, strength, and determination firsthand. His influence was lasting and profound, particularly in the life of his immediate younger brother, Ezechiel, who followed in his footsteps. He is survived by his mother, Marylia Darilus. His father, Etienne Dort, passed away in early 2025. He is also survived by four siblings — Ezechiel Dort, Genevieve Bien-Aime, Littane Bien-Aime Ilfrard, and Jackson Bien-Aime — as well as a host of aunts, uncles, cousins, extended relatives, and friends who loved him deeply and will continue to honor his memory. Although his life ended prematurely, it carried great meaning and was tremendously impactful. He was a blessing to everyone who knew him, never failing to lend a listening ear or extend a helping hand to a loved one in need, even if it meant going out of his way. He was generous, loving, selfless, patient, and kind. He will be remembered as a trailblazer within his family and the firstborn child and role model whose path opened doors for his siblings and loved ones to follow. He will also be remembered for his brilliance and intellect. His legacy lives on through the values he embodied, the lives he helped shape, and the individuals he positively impacted during his time here on earth. His memory will remain a lasting presence in the hearts and lives of those who knew and loved him dearly. A Celebration of Life event was held on Saturday, April 25, 2026, at 9:45 am at the Missionary Church of the Haitian Community (100 Temple Street in Somerville) for close family and friends to pay their respects. To sign the online guestbook, please visit <https://everloved.com/life-of/adelson-dort/>.

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