By Dan Rabb

A new Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) policy to reduce the number of vehicles on the Esplanade is creating new barriers for sailors with disabilities.

Until recently, DCR routinely permitted residents with limited mobility and other handicaps to access the park by car to attend programming at Community Boating Inc. (CBI). The sailing center serves over 300 people with disabilities through its Universal Access Program and veteran partnerships, and many used group vans or personal vehicles to reach CBI.

Continued on Page 2

By Joe Walsh

Jaywalking Fine Is Only One Dollar

It’s a law that residents openly mock, activists call antiquated and police officers do not even bother enforcing.

Jaywalking is a time-tested local custom in Boston. Pedestrians here are uniquely willing to dart across the street with little regard for oncoming traffic, and no-walk signals are often treated as vague suggestions rather than serious commands. All thosejaywalkers are technically eligible for fines, but the penalty is tiny.

The state authorized Boston and other cities to finejaywalkers just $1 for their first three offenses. For any brazen scofflaw who jaywalks four or more times in a single year, the fine

Continued on Page 2
Jaywalking
Continued from Page 1

Punishing jaywalkers through fines is not a Boston Police Department (BPD) priority, says Sergeant John Boyle, a department spokesperson. Instead, BPD officers focus their attention on vehicle traffic rules. "The safety of pedestrians is a priority in the city of Boston," Boyle said.

Boston could tame its rampant jaywalking culture by making it easier for pedestrians to cross the street, not by punishing them, says Brendan Kearney, a spokesperson for pedestrian advocacy group WalkBoston. Bostonians often choose to jaywalk, he says, because sidewalks are inconveniently located or because traffic lights are inconsistently timed. By making streets work better for pedestrians, jaywalking would be less necessary, he says.

"It's kind of a policy failure if there are lots of people crossing outside of a crosswalk," Kearney said.

Pedestrian focused design would reverse decades of efforts to establish cars as the dominant users of city streets.

Anti-jaywalking laws date back to the early 20th century, when a mix of pedestrians, trolleys and merchants began contending with private automobiles, often with fatal results. Some locales considered banning automobiles, but automakers and their allies launched advertising campaigns and legal efforts encouraging pedestrians to yield to cars, according to Kearney.

Auto industry promotional material called a person who freely walked into the street a "jay," which meant ignorance or rube, suggesting that streetwise urbanites stayed out of the way of cars.

"The word 'jaywalking' is probably the greatest marketing effort ever concocted," Kearney said.

The Boston City Council joined this nationwide effort in 1964, passing an ordinance that allowed the police to fine jaywalkers. Thousands of $1 jaywalking tickets were written in the law's early years, the Boston Globe reported at the time. But state legislators never increased the maximum penalty even as inflation grew more than eightfold in 50 years, so jaywalking remained a local tradition.

For advocates like Kearney, this stubborn refusal to pay attention to crosswalks and walk signals is not necessarily a problem. In fact, Massachusetts has one of the nation's lowest rates of traffic fatalities, he notes. While other cities hand out double- or triple-digit jaywalking fines, Boston's pedestrians are willing to reclaim city streets.

"In Boston, it's kind of scattered," Kearney says. "People really take over the streets sometimes, which I don't think is a terrible thing."

Barrels
Continued from Page 1

The upcoming South End pilot, spearheaded by Fox and East Brookline residents Dan Riviello and David Stone, will evaluate collapsible trash bins that fold down to a flat ring for easy storage in a home, apartment or a small outdoor space. The containers, designed for campuses, are roughly the size and shape of an outdoor residential trash can when expanded. Made of a thick plastic fabric supported by a wire coil, they look like an oversized version of the collapsible laundry baskets found in nearly every college dorm room.

In the South End, containers will be issued to 20 volunteers in different buildings on East Brookline Street between Albany Street and Harrison Avenue. The pilot starts with trash collection this Tuesday and will last six to eight weeks. Volunteers will fill out surveys detailing their experience with the collapsible barrels.

"The city's excited," said Brian Coughlin, the city's superintendent of waste reduction. "We know the challenges that the South End and all the downtown areas face, so this could be the next big thing going."

Organizers hope feedback from volunteers, combined with input from city officials and contractor Capitol Waste Management, will clarify whether the containers are an effective measure against trash woes. The barrels will be evaluated on a wide range of criteria, from their effectiveness at limiting trash-day messes to weather resistance and ease of use for trash collectors.

"Six to eight weeks should give us a pretty good picture of how well it's adopted, whether or not it's actually having the desired effect," Fox said. "We're looking for, whether people are saying it just doesn't work, it's too dirty, or whatever else," Fox said. "We want all the hiccups and all the dirty details so we can think about whether we want to expand it to a larger, more robust group of people."

The nonprofit Esplanade Association supports DCR's new vehicle policy. The Esplanade Association represents tenants and visitors to the Esplanade. It is a membership organization that promotes the use of public space as a source of enjoyment and recreation.

CBI and DCR share a strong working relationship, and he is confident of the Esplanade's support for the project.

The city is also prepared to run a similar pilot on Beacon Hill, according to Coughlin. While no specific street has been selected, Coughlin hopes to try the collapsible bins on the hill itself, where the streets present unique issues for trash collectors. He says it is now up to the Beacon Hill Civic Association to move the project forward.

Coughlin insists that, unlike the decision to move trash pickup an hour earlier, the final call on whether the collapsible bins are adopted across the downtown neighborhoods will not be made by the city unilaterally.

"It's going to be a collaborative decision," he said. "We want what's best for the neighborhood."

Esplanade
Continued from Page 1

Over the past year, DCR enacted stricter protocols to curtail growing automobile use by businesses and non-profits like CBI that call the Esplanade home. Personal vehicles, even those with handicapped permits, are no longer allowed in the park, and group vans carrying disabled passengers have often been forced to unload far from CBI's boathouse.

While CBI officials acknowledge that cars on park pathways created safety concerns for pedestrians, they say the new restrictions make the sailing club practically unreachable for some disabled sailors.

"I want to make sure that our mission doesn't get curtailed," said Charlie Zechel, CBI's executive director. "Things got out of control with people driving onto the Esplanade, so I get this is a reaction, but I want to sort out what makes common sense. All we want is to keep running our programs."

With personal vehicles effectively banned from the park, many sailors in the adaptive program must now use street parking across Storrow Drive. A CBI employee pushes them in a wheelchair nearly 1,000 feet over the Appleton Bridge and down the Esplanade to the sailing center. Adaptive sailors say it's an inefficient process that can be humiliating.

"It's demoralizing," said Susan Coughlin, who until recently parked at CBI's boathouse for her adaptive sailing appointments. "The young folks are kind enough to get me in the wheelchair, but it's embarrassing as hell."

Andrew Alletag, CBI's director of operations and universal access program, says Coughlin's reaction is common.

"When you have a disability, you don't want to burden other people," he said. "Everyone has pride, so this creates an awkward situation for them."

DCR's new rules have also forced disabled sailors to increasingly rely on The RIDE, the MBTA's handicap accessible car service. While The RIDE can still drive onto the Esplanade, its notorious tardiness makes it ill-suited for sailors with busy schedules or limited by a caretaker's availability.

"We regularly have people who wait two plus hours to get picked up," Alletag said.

"Last week we had a woman abandoned here by The RIDE for hours. We had to break the rules and walk a private car onto the Esplanade to get her."

While DCR declined multiple requests for comment, CBI's Zechel says the agency has been receptive to criticism of its new policy. He says CBI and DCR share a strong working relationship, and he is confident of reaching an agreement.

The nonprofit Esplanade Association supports DCR's new vehicle policy but sees room for compromise, according to Executive Director Michael Nichols. Both Nichols and Zechel point to the former site of Lee Pool, set to open as a new access ramp and parking area in the coming weeks, as a possible pick up and drop off zone for disabled patrons.

But to Coughlin, the potential solutions will be too little, too late.

"There was no plan in place for us. It felt like we were non-people, like we don't matter."
Residents Against Digital Billboards

By Dan Rabb

Downtown Crossing may be one of the city’s fastest growing commercial districts, but when it comes to large digital billboards, some area residents and business leaders want to pump the brakes on becoming Boston’s Times Square. One proposed sign in particular is raising the hackles of Downtown denizens: a planned 25-foot-tall video billboard that would hang above the sidewalk at the corner of Washington Street and Temple Place.

Both the Downtown Boston Residents’ Association (DBRA) and Downtown Boston Business Improvement District (BID) oppose the sign, which they claim violates zoning and creates light pollution. Downtown leaders also argue that the sign, combined with the other digital displays popping up nearby, risks permanently over-commercializing Washington Street while the city completes a formal process to develop a clear vision for the area.

“The digital sign for the location proposed does not meet the city’s signage guidelines and therefore we are unable to support it.”

Continued on Page 9

Iconic Clock May Become Reliable

By Dan Rabb

The iconic yet frequently inaccurate clock adorning one of Boston’s oldest skyscrapers will soon have a new set of hands that experts say will make the city’s most famous timepiece more reliable.

The four-faced clock atop the Custom House Tower is one of the largest clocks in the U.S., a symbol of Boston since its construction in 1915. While it may be instantly recognizable to generations of Bostonians, the Custom House clock has never been particularly effective at measuring time. Ice, snow and wind often bring its massive hands to a standstill, but even in good weather the clock runs slow and requires frequent adjustments.

Now, the building’s owners, who operate the tower as a collection of timeshares called “The Marriott Vacation Club Pulse at Custom House,” are targeting one of the main culprits keeping the tower’s ticker tardy: the hands themselves.

“It doesn’t keep accurate time right now,” said Susan Knack-Brown, senior principal

Continued on Page 8
Police Line Do Not Cross

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

By Jason Carlton
District 4: 650 Harrison Avenue, 617-343-4457
District A-1: 40 New Sudbury Street, 617-343-4627

Police Line Do Not Cross

ROBBERY MUFFLED BY MORNING

Around 9:12 am on July 9, two officers responded to a call for an armed robbery from Berkshire Bank at 1320 Washington Street.

After arriving, officers spoke with one of three witnesses. She told them that the suspect entered the bank just after opening, then approached the counter with sunglasses and a partially covered face. When she asked the suspect to remove his glasses, he slid her a note that said “Put the money in the hard hat I have a gun,” placed a hard hat on the table and pointed a black firearm at her.

The witness told the suspect her cash drawer was empty, and even pulled it open when he became enraged and shouted. His anger in vain, the suspect moved to the drawer and searched the area to no avail.

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By Joe Walsh

Pedestrians could replace cars and trucks on Charles Street for one Sunday afternoon this fall.

Modeled after the Back Bay’s Open Newbury Street and Beacon Hill’s longstanding annual Holiday Stroll, the plan would close Charles Street to car traffic for a few hours on September 22, allowing pedestrians to walk in the middle of the street while businesses enliven parking areas. Organizers hope to bring life to Charles Street, reintroducing residents to one of the city’s signature shopping and business districts.

The proposal earned a largely favorable response from residents and business owners at a Beacon Hill Civic Association (BHCA) traffic committee meeting Tuesday night. While the plan still needs city and BHCA approval, supporters are optimistic they can organize and publicize the event in less than two months.

The planned street closure would coincide with Fall HillFest, an annual community event that fills part of Mount Vernon Street with food, live music and family-friendly activities, shutting down that street as well. Both of these outdoor events could complement each other, says BHCA Executive Director Patricia Tully.

“I think this can be mutually beneficial,” Tully said.

Businesses on Charles Street are broadly supportive of the street closure plan. Members of the Beacon Hill Business Association (BHBA) voted overwhelmingly to support the idea, which could bring new activity to area stores and restaurants, says Ali Ringenburg from the BHBA.

If the plan takes the same course as Open Newbury Street, these businesses will be allowed to serve food and set up programming in the parking spots outside their front doors. Ringenburg supports this idea, as long as it is restricted solely to businesses with brick and mortar locations on Charles Street.

The closure would fall on Car Free Day, an international event that encourages commuters and travelers to leave their cars at home. Ringenburg says businesses were reluctant to support a daylong parking ban proposed for

Continued on Page 8
A new city program to control invasive plants in the Back Bay Fens is leading to a surprising reduction in crime in the park, Fens users say.

The city’s Parks and Recreation Department began plowing down invasive phragmites reeds along the Muddy River in the Fens earlier this summer. This pilot program has removed many of the notorious hiding spots scattered amongst the reeds, discouraging after hours loitering and criminal activity.

The park sees an uptick in crime every summer, says Fenway Victory Gardens President Elizabeth Bertolozzi. But the severity of problems like vandalism, littering and trespassing in the Victory Gardens, which occupy a large portion of the Fens, declined when the reeds were plowed down, she says.

“Our safety and security in the gardens have increased substantially,” she said. “There seems to be a direct relationship between the height of the reeds and the incidences of security and safety problems.”

This effort has also brought more recreational users to the Fens, Bertolozzi noted, because runners and picnickers feel more comfortable in the park without tall reeds that block lines of sight.

Boston Police Department spokesperson John Boyle is unsure whether the lack of tall reeds has directly impacted crime rates in the Fens, though he says a general perception of hiddenness can lead to more criminal activity.

“Physical barriers can be problematic,” said Boyle.

The reeds have formed a formidable physical barrier for decades. A foreign species, they took over the banks of the Muddy River and prevented native plants from taking root, says Margaret Dyson, the city’s director of historic parks. Removal will allow a diverse ecological mix to spring up, which creates a more robust habitat for native wildlife and increases the river’s capacity to absorb.

And with fewer tall reeds blocking the view across the river, the park’s newfound openness is an added benefit. The city has heard positive feedback from the community so far, according to Dyson.

“It really does provide a better sense of connection between areas in the park,” Dyson says.

The Parks and Recreation Department plans to mow down phragmites in the Fens again later this summer, Dyson said.

Continued on Page 9
Neighbours Object To Ming’s Expansion

By Dan Rabb

The proposed expansion of Ming’s Supermarket into an adjacent warehouse is raising the ire of East Berkeley Street residents who say the grocer has long been a nightmare neighbor.

Ming’s filed a petition last month with the city’s zoning board to allow the use of a garage on East Berkeley Street as a warehouse for food storage. The market illegally used the garage as a warehouse for years without proper permits, the company’s lawyers acknowledge, but after a series of city citations, it is seeking to bring its operations in line with zoning and health codes.

Yet many residents of the surrounding area have voiced strong opposition to the plans, which they say will reward a business that has routinely ignored city regulations and tuned out complaints about trash and odors emanating from the property.

“An operator of a food establishment shouldn’t have to be told to keep your place clean,” said resident John Connelly at a city-led abutters meeting on Wednesday.

By Zach Carmosino

For Cierra Peters, manager of Boomerangs’ South End location, receiving community acknowledgement affirmed the importance of the thrift store’s work.

“It’s just recognition for the ability to keep people alive,” she said.

On Monday, Washington Gateway Main Streets (WGMS), a civic organization that promotes economic growth in the South End and Lower Roxbury, recognized Boomerangs as the recipient for their business of the year award.

In a speech in front of Boomerangs, Bud Lazievy, WGMS president, cited the store’s commitment to AIDS healthcare and prevention, as well as its role in the community as a vendor of affordable merchandise, as the reasons his organization chose to recognize Boomerangs.

“I’m very proud to have them in our community,” he said.

WGMS Recognizes Nonprofit Boomerangs

Continued on Page 8

Continued on Page 8
Hippies
Continued from Page 1

tour guides pointed the hippies out to gawking out-of-town visitors.

“The area has become a tourist attraction,” the Boston Globe reported in 1968, “as the hippies perambulate barefooted along Charles St., testing their bedrolls on their backs and purposely tattered dungees swilling around their ankles.”

But the relationship between these new arrivals and longstanding residents quickly became fraught. Their new-age style and free love mentality proved a caustic pairing with the neighborhood’s wealthy Brahmins and elderly pensioners.

Amid this clash, the Globe wrote that hippie encampments had cast a “shaggy shadow” over Beacon Hill. Businesses on Charles Street claimed the slavering crowds drove away customers, residents insisted their new neighbors left messes and realtors said property values took a hit.

Authorities were reluctant to control the “love-ins” on the Common at first, realizing that idleness was not a crime, but the police eventually broke this truce. One Saturday, officers used dogs and night sticks to sweep thousands of hippies out of the Common. They temporarily dispersed from a corner of the park dubbed “hippieville,” amid snide and unsympathetic media coverage, but eventually returned.

Politicians could no longer ignore these encampments. One state representative was arrested for assaulting a group of hippies, whom he referred to as “parasites.” Mayor Kevin White, a Beacon Hill resident, vowed to clean up Charles Street, admitting that the city failed to address the supposed blight.

“(The city) made a mistake in its handling of the hippies,” White told the Globe in 1968. Despite the Mayor’s efforts, hippies continued to occupy Charles Street, and the Common remained the site of antiwar protest and counter-cultural revelry until the hippie population began dissipating in 1969.

Charles Street picked up a new reputation, however, as a center of drug dealing. One dealer told the Globe that up to $3,000 in marijuana, LSD and other drugs changed hands on Charles Street every Friday. Residents drew a distinction between hippies and the dealers who had opportunistically followed them into the area.

“These are not young people with a philosophy,” one resident said in 1969. “These are burns who have been given a new lease on life by acquiring the title ‘hippie,’ which carries with it some sort of identifiable status.”

With the area’s reputation scarred, concentrated police efforts eventually drove out both the drug dealers and any remaining hippies. As the street reclaimed its affluent character, its connection with Boston’s countercultural history became a vague memory.

“The street is more relaxed now,” Patrolman Jerry Bowen said in 1971. “The police did one hell of a good job cleaning up the hippies along here.”

Custom Clock
Continued from Page 3

at Simpson Gumpertz & Heger (SGH), the engineering firm hired to oversee the restoration. “There are issues with operations with both the minute and hour hands, and it’s due to the weight of the hands.”

According to Knack-Brown, the clock’s eight hands are water logged after withstanding decades of New England weather, slowing the timepiece’s century old mechanics.

The wooden hour hands, thought to be the originals from 1915, are particularly saturated and heavy. Although the 14-foot minute hands are made of fiber glass after a 1988 restoration, they suffer from the same problem. Cracks have formed in the hands’ outer shells, allowing water to seep into their internal insulating material.

Along with the mechanical concerns, weather damage has also created aesthetic issues, as the gold leaf covering the hands has faded and completely worn off in many places.

Charles Street
Continued from Page 5

Charles Street that Sunday, but a few hours without vehicles of any kind seemed beneficial.

“Parking on Charles Street is extremely valuable,” Ringenburg said.

Some residents at the BHCA meeting noted traffic concerns. Without Charles Street as an outlet, cars could spill off Storrow Drive and the Longfellow Bridge and percolate into neighborhood side streets. A traffic plan for the event has not yet been devised, but Sunday afternoon traffic is typically light, so organizers may reuse traffic plans from the Holiday Stroll, which closes the street for an evening every December.

The city has not committed to the Open Charles Street concept yet, says Public Works Director Jacob Wessel, but it could see a fate similar to Open Newbury Street, now in its third year. Back Bay residents and businesses shared concerns in the runup to Open Newbury, he noted, but many of those worries have faded.

“One it took place and people saw the fun and joy that everybody got out of a car-free environment,” Wessel said, “people really got into it.”

Ming’s
Continued from Page 7

“That’s indicative of not being a good neighbor.”

The state of the property surrounding Ming’s has long been a frustration for many residents. They point to the market’s front driveway on Washington Street, which is often strewn with litter, broken equipment and other refuse.

Other neighbors say the store makes no effort to maintain the appearance of its building, ignoring graffiti and neglecting basic aesthetic maintenance. Strong odors from a dumpster near the store’s entrance also led to neighborhood complaints and, eventually, a citation from the city’s Inspectional Services Division.

While Ming’s opened in the South End in 1988, residents say the problems began when the company was sold to the out of state New York Marri.

Boomerangs
Continued from Page 7

The thrill store, which operates as one of four locations in Boston, was established by AIDS Action. AIDS Action is a provider of HIV prevention and treatment services, which is operated by Fenway Health, an LGBT health care clinic.

The ‘Washington Street location sells a variety of used items at affordable prices. Although best known for selling clothing, customers will also find a variety of other items, including furniture and household items.

Boomerangs is entirely nonprofit and its proceeds directly help prevent the spread of HIV and provide treatment to those living with HIV and AIDS in Massachusetts.

Tams Tidwell, the general manager of Boomerangs’ South End location, said the store makes an effort to establish relationships with clients, many of whom are regular customers.

Larievey said that he and his husband visit Boomerangs at least twice a week and are impressed by its atmosphere.

“When you enter the store, you’re really greeted as if you’re family and are welcome to come again,” Larievey said. “They make sure you found everything you needed.”

According to Larievey, WGMS chose to recognize Boomerangs not only because of its mission, but because of its evolution into a community center.

“Many times, we’ll meet our neighbors, friends, business associates and politicians here shopping together,” he said.

Donations to Boomerangs come largely from people who live in the neighborhood. Tidwell said the store recently acquired a mid-century plate set through a donation. It is just one example of the fascinating donations Boomerangs receives from South Enders.

“What’s really special about this store is that you never know what you’re going to find,” Tidwell said.

Garrick Durst, WGMS board of directors vice president, said that along with its expanding variety of products, he appreciates the community value that he finds in Boomerangs’ products.

“There’s something cool about buying something with a story,” he said.

WGMS is supported by Boston Main Streets, a commercial revitalization project operated by the mayor’s office. It began in 1983 when Councillor Thomas Menino established the first Main Street program in Roslindale.

Although it has since expanded to 20 districts, including Washington Gateway, Larievey still emphasizes the importance of the community work that was the network’s original inspiration.

“We want to work as a unit with the mayor, as one team,” said Larievey.

Durst said that he thinks the core mission of community vitality in the South End has been fulfilled by Boomerangs.

“They really care about the people here.”
Digital Billboards
Continued from Page 3

Downtown BID CEO Rosemarie Sansone said in a written statement.

“It doesn’t seem like this is the right project or the right time,” agreed Rishi Shukla, who heads the DBRA. “There are so many issues and concerns that come together, which is why we need to take a step back and look at it from a different perspective.”

Yet the idea that the planned billboard is the right move for the neighborhood is fiercely disputed by the Serras and friends of Domenic Serra.

“Our brother Domenic is a real estate developer, and he has a lot of experience in this field,” said Domenic Serra’s brother, Jonathan. “He understands the importance of lighting and how it can enhance the overall experience of walking down the street.”

Domenic Serra, who runs a real estate company in the area, said the proposed billboard would be a smart investment for the neighborhood.

“We have the opportunity to create something that will benefit everyone in the area,” he said. “The billboard will be a focal point that will draw people to the area and make it more vibrant.”

Yet to the Serras, the billboard is a ridiculous idea that would ruin the character of the neighborhood.

“We don’t want to see our neighborhood change,” said Domenic Serra. “We want to maintain the character of the area and keep it the way it is today.”

The Serras are not alone in their concerns.

“People in the neighborhood are concerned about the impact of the billboard on the environment,” said a resident. “We don’t want to see the trees and plants affected by the light.”

The debate over the proposed billboard continues, with both sides offering their own perspectives on the issue.

Fens Crime
Continued from Page 6

Mowing efforts could take place as many as six times per year, depending on how quickly the reeds grow back.

“This mowing program is just one part of a larger park restoration project,” said a spokesperson for the Emerald Necklace Conservancy. “It’s a big job, but we’re committed to making sure the Fens are healthy and safe for everyone.”

“It’s incredible how open the park is when those reeds are gone,” said another spokesperson. “People will have a perspective on these parks that they haven’t seen in many years.”

Once this removal project is complete, the Fens and Muddy River will look far more open, says Evan Bradley from the Emerald Necklace Conservancy. This work will restore the vision of designer Frederick Law Olmsted, Bradley notes, making the park safer and more usable.

“You can see what need to remove these reeds,” said Bradley. “It’s a big job, but we’re committed to making sure the Fens are healthy and safe for everyone.”

The problem is far from solved.

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‘Uncle Jimmy’ Keough (1942-2019)

By Joe Walsh

Coworkers remember James Keough as a tenacious real estate broker, but his clients and friends remember “Uncle Jimmy” best for the elaborate stories he told.

Keough died in his Bay Village home last week, at the age of 77. He leaves behind several siblings, more than a dozen nieces and nephews, and many close friends and colleagues.

Colleagues say Keough was an honest broker who worked loyally on his clients’ behalf. And, in an industry where personal connections are essential, he came to every real estate showing with a story.

“He had a phenomenal sense of humor,” said Dan Mullin, who worked with Keough for 30 years. “He always had a story to tell, no matter where you were or what you were doing.”

A longtime Boston resident, Keough grew up in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Readville with six brothers and sisters. Yet he quickly moved away from the city’s southernmost neighborhood.

“At an early age, he knew he was a downtown boy,” Mullin said. “He got out of Readville as fast as the speed of light.”

Keough spent time downtown with his mother, who would spring him from high school to embark on elaborate adventures. Mullin said. His mother rewarded him with muffins from Jordan Marsh, and Jordan Marsh eventually rewarded Keough’s patronage with a job. After that, Keough joined the Air Force and served in Italy, where he discovered a lifelong love for the city of Venice.

He eventually settled in Bay Village with his fleet of vintage cars, and he spent large amounts of time in Provincetown. Keough went to work for Mullin’s Boston real estate firm by the 1990s, where Mullin says he was an “old-fashioned broker” with a loyal and friendly attitude.

Keough’s gregarious personality was also evident in his love of entertaining, Mullin says. He enjoyed music and the theatre, especially during trips to Manhattan, and he “solved every problem in the world with baked lasagna,” according to Mullin.

“He had the best sense of humor of anybody,” said Suzanne Iannella, a longtime coworker. “He gave nicknames to everybody.”

For his 60th birthday party, Keough traveled to Venice with legions of his friends. He brought musician friends from New York to perform at his party, an endeavor that required a baby grand piano to be lifted from the city’s canals to the ballroom on the top floor of the Hotel Danieli.

More than anything, Keough is remembered for his generosity. He helped friends during the AIDS epidemic, Mullin said, and he once worked doggedly to find an aliling friend tickets to see his last Red Sox game.

This generosity extended to colleagues, says realtor Linda Barrett. At one point, Keough rented out an entire restaurant for Barrett’s 50th birthday party, an elaborate event with more than 100 attendees.

“It was like a wedding,” Barrett said. “We took the area into consideration, so it’s not shining in anyone’s windows,” Domenic Serra said. “Look, I own a house and I don’t want a digital billboard across the street from my house either.”

Opponents of the sign insist they are against any change to the area that violates zoning while they work for different firms. Later, O’Hara sent apartment-hunting friends to a Back Bay rental property that Keough managed because she knew they would enjoy living in his building. That ability to build relationships and make people comfortable, she says, made him a skilled broker and a loyal friend.

“He made you feel like you were part of his family all the time,” O’Hara said.

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“That brings vibrancy and light to the area,” he said. “I mean this is Downtown Crossing, are you kidding me?”

“Boston’s a real city now. If you walk down the street, you must be the right time,” agreed Rishi Shukla, who heads the DBRA. “There are so many issues and concerns that come together, which is why we need to take a step back and look at it from a different perspective.”

Yet the idea that the planned billboard is the right move for the neighborhood is fiercely disputed by the Serras and friends of Domenic Serra.

“Our brother Domenic is a real estate developer, and he has a lot of experience in this field,” said Domenic Serra’s brother, Jonathan. “He understands the importance of lighting and how it can enhance the overall experience of walking down the street.”

Domenic Serra, who runs a real estate company in the area, said the proposed billboard would be a smart investment for the neighborhood.

“We have the opportunity to create something that will benefit everyone in the area,” he said. “The billboard will be a focal point that will draw people to the area and make it more vibrant.”

Yet to the Serras, the billboard is a ridiculous idea that would ruin the character of the neighborhood.

“We don’t want to see our neighborhood change,” said Domenic Serra. “We want to maintain the character of the area and keep it the way it is today.”

The debate over the proposed billboard continues, with both sides offering their own perspectives on the issue.

“The Paramount sign down the street is like a lit-up skyscraper compared to what we want to put up,” said Domenic Serra. “The sign is a natural fit in Boston’s central business district. He says a healthy Downtown will include signage just like his, a symbol of Boston’s growth and economic prosperity.

“Boston’s a real city now. If you walk down that corridor at night now it looks dead, and this brings vibrancy and light to the area,” he said. “I mean this is Downtown Crossing, are you kidding me?”
By Caroline Broderick

Situated perfectly between the Financial District and edge of Beacon Hill, Bowdoin Street is near all necessary amenities. With public transportation, restaurants and shopping only blocks away, the city is at your doorstep but with seclusion and peace.

Prior to the construction of Bowdoin Place in 2003, Bowdoin Street was the home to many historical buildings from the 1800’s such as the Bowdoin Street Church, erected in 1831. The church stands tall as the St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church today, and although it is now closed, the architecture and beauty designed by Solomon Willard can still be appreciated.

Bowdoin Street is tucked between the popular Cambridge and Beacon Streets, creating the perfect connection between two main streets. The location was even fit for John F. Kennedy who kept his Bowdoin apartment as his registered address from 1946 until his death, even when he lived in the White House.

10 Bowdoin Street, Unit 12 is a modern two bedroom, three bathroom townhouse with high ceilings and lots of natural light. Part of the professionally managed Bowdoin Place, this duplex’s private entrance makes it feel like a personal townhouse.

A foyer with an adjacent powder room and closet welcomes residents home before stepping into the spacious living area. The space is large enough for a relaxing living room and dining room, the area is fitted with a ceiling fan as well. Dark oak wood flooring spans the first floor and the second floor has wall to wall carpeting.

The kitchen has wood cabinetry with plenty of space and stone countertops. Additional room next to the kitchen allows for a smaller, casual dining area. The kitchen is fitted with a dishwasher, refrigerator, microwave and range oven. The first floor has extra storage room accessible from the living area.

The second floor of this duplex contains the master bedroom and second bedroom. Both bedrooms have en suite full bathrooms. The master has a custom walk-in closet with hanging and shelving space. Both bedrooms have wide windows.

A washer and dryer are located on the second floor and this residence has central and forced air. In the attached garage, there is one parking space available for residents. This 1,405 square foot home has a concierge available, an on-site storage unit, highway and T-station access, and is nearby local parks and stores.

This home is listed at $1.395 million. Contact Paul Whaley at (617) 460-4238 or Charlie Ring at (617) 699-2597 of Coldwell Banker for more information.
Beacon Hill Townhouse - 160 Mount Vernon Street

This inviting and aesthetically pleasing four story townhouse built in 1871 is in excellent condition. The current owners, who have resided there for 34 years, have brought the house into the 21st century while retaining historic details. There is sensational light and lovely views from both the front and rear. The house has a wonderful, spacious roof deck, gracious rooms, central air and a beautiful garden which has been on The Beacon Hill Garden Tour. The building foundation has been underpinned and the garden level has been totally renovated. There is a full on-site parking space. This is a “must-see.”

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