

The Hyde Park Bulletin

Volume 22, Issue 14

April 6, 2023



The National Main Streets 2023 Conference cruised through Hyde Park last week and hit several Hyde Park restaurants like Las Delicias Colombianas shown here.

PHOTO BY MARY ELLEN GAMBON

Hyde Park Main Street receives national attention

Mary Ellen Gambon
Staff Reporter

Dozens of community activists from around the country were treated to the best of what Hyde Park has to offer during a daylong series of events on Tuesday, March 28 as part of Boston's hosting of the national Main Street Now 2023 Conference last week.

The day's theme was "Affordable Housing Meets Main Street," according to organizer Gretchen Van Ness, the executive director of LGBTQ Senior Housing, Inc. The nonprofit is redeveloping the former Rogers Middle School into The Pryde, the first LGBTQ-friendly affordable housing development in New England. She partnered with Thien Simpson, the executive director of Hyde Park Main Streets, (HPMS) to create a mobile workshop that showcased Hyde Park's glorious past and promising future.

The Pryde, Van Ness explained, was the day's centerpiece because it is a national model for how responsible development can preserve historical community elements while generating new partnerships.

"As always, we make history in Hyde Park," she told the packed morning reception at Las Delicias Colombianas on River Street. "We continue to redefine what it means to be an inclusive and welcoming and affirming community for all."

"I couldn't be a bigger supporter of the Main Streets program," state Rep. Rob Consalvo said. "We understand how important local business districts are — they are the lifeblood of our community."

He described Van Ness as "a civic giant in our community and in our city."

Mimi Turchinetz, the presi-



Hyde Park Board of Trade President Scott Batey helped to show newcomers what Hyde Park is really like at Park 54 during the tour.

PHOTO BY MARY ELLEN GAMBON

dent of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA), spoke about the value of community building.

"It was really the best community process that I have ever seen in developing housing," she said in her praise of Penrose, The Pryde's developer. Penrose spent several years in community meetings before breaking ground on the project.

"In terms of Main Streets, this really is a national model," Turchinetz added.

Hyde Park Board of Trade President Scott Batey pointed out the spirit of "civic interaction" in Hyde Park. He said residents simultaneously appreciate its historic figures and homes while embracing an increasingly diverse population.

"Our businesses have a wide range of cultures," Batey explained. "Some of them are run

by first-generation Americans."

Visitors wearing hardhats spent about an hour touring The Pryde's construction site, learning about how its future residents are anticipated to jumpstart engagement in the business district.

Longtime neighborhood advocate and realtor Pat Tierney added that new housing will generate additional shoppers.

Van Ness explained the concept of The Pryde in the school's former auditorium as construction workers whirred around her. The building will include a community room, local artwork, and spaces honoring LGBTQ community achievements and the 54th Regiment, the first American military unit consisting of Black soldiers during the Civil War.

"I can visualize someone who



The Parkway Rotary is hoping you can help pollinators by giving them much needed food in the spring.

COURTESY PHOTO

Rotary encourages No Mow May

Ariane Komyati
Staff Reporter

Spring is in the air, and many community members are eager to begin their spring gardening - but the Parkway Rotary Club (PRC) is asking gardeners to wait to mow their lawns. The PRC is encouraging Parkway residents to participate in "No Mow May," which allows grass to grow un-mowed throughout the month of May. This helps create habitat and forage for early season pollinators, and is particularly important in urban areas where floral resources can be limited.

No Mow May is an initiative throughout the local Rotary District 7930, which spans through Boston and the North Shore.

"The newest of the seven Areas of Focus, Protecting the Environment, has been an important area for our district," explained PRC President Kelsea Lawler. "The district and our club are working on projects such as planting native pollinator gardens, No Mow May, the Ipswich River cleanup project, and many others to support this focus."

The PRC believes that participating in No Mow May is just

No Mow

Continued on page 7

18-22 Arboretum receives share of criticism

Richard Heath
Staff Reporter

Boylston Properties and Velney Development propose to build a six-story, 230-unit apartment building on the Arboretum Road cul-de-sac on the edge of the Arnold Arboretum; they had a March full of community meetings.

As reported by The Bulletin, the new housing replaces a one-story, two-acre factory building put up for sale on Aug. 26, 2021 for \$12.5 million.

After meeting with Roslindale residents on March 1, Boylston-Velney went to the virtual Jamaica Plain Housing Committee (JPHC) meeting on March 21; although geographically in Roslindale, 18-

Arboretum

Continued on page 5

Main Street

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Letters *continued from page 4*

quote is substantially accurate, the Councilor is sorely in need of a civics lesson. No Councilor you are NOT the government. We, the people, the voters are the government and we hire you on a two year basis to listen to us and represent our interests. Our elected officials work for us and not vice-versa.

Secondly, as to the very salient points raised by the Safety Association, I am in agreement as to the ill conceived nature of this plan, particularly its potentially devastating effect on local businesses which have already suffered disproportio-

tionately from Covid lockdowns.

Finally, I would add another point for consideration, i.e. the discriminatory effect of the proposed "Road Diet" on senior citizens who are not as agile or mobile as we used to be and for whom it is not feasible to rely on biking or extensive walking or even jumping on and off of buses on a regular basis. The gratification and glorification of the young and healthy, to the detriment of others seems to be emblematic of a tone-deaf, if unwitting, bias. Our City government may pro-

mote departments with fancy names like "Age Strong" but it constitutes mere lip service if its policies are not in congruence with them. Thank you for your attention to the foregoing.

Atty. Donald E. Feener
 West Roxbury

Editor's Note: *Because the Bulletin did not cover the meeting in which the quote used in the advertisement on Page 7 of last week's newspaper was attributed to Councilor Lara, we cannot confirm the quote is accurate or any such quote was even uttered. Perhaps Councilor Lara can clarify her remark with a response to this newspaper in the future.*

Main Street *continued from page 1*

went to the school here wanting to reserve their old classroom as their new home," she said as she took questions.

"We have an estimated 65,000 LGBTQ elder residents in Massachusetts alone, although not all of them need affordable housing," Van Ness continued. "But we know that our LGBTQ elders are less likely to have family and community support as they age."

Thirty tourists later sampled veal meatballs at Antonio's Bacari, enjoyed Dominican fare at Rincon Caribeno, and feasted on tacos and chicken wings at Park 54. They also viewed local artwork at The Switch Co-Op.

At Park 54, events coordinator Chala Harris-Garcia explained that the Black-owned restaurant has succeeded since opening last year by blending Caribbean and American cuisines with soul food.

"You never know what you're going to get," she said. The venue hosts music, karaoke and an all-you-can-eat buffet brunch on the weekends.

Boston City Councilor At-Large Ruthzee Louijeune grew up in Hyde Park and continues to live here. She stressed the importance of Main Streets programs serving as "economic engines" for communities while creating employment opportunities for residents.

She noted that business owners came together to purchase a Fairmount Avenue building last year for \$1 million to preserve it for businesses of color. It now houses a clothing store, a barber, and a shop specializing in hair extensions and wigs.

"I remember when that

building was such an eyesore," said Jerry Filbin, a board member of Rehoboth Beach Main Street in Delaware who grew up in Hyde Park.

"This area has really come alive with a theater and great restaurants," he added. "I'm amazed."

At Ron's Gourmet Ice Cream, Ron and Jay Covitz gave visitors the scoop on the ice cream that was named the third-best ice cream parlor in the world in a 2007 National Geographic traveler's guide.

The day wrapped up with a tour of Camp Meigs in Readville, where the 54th Regiment was stationed. Visitors got to share their experiences at Roundhead Brewing Company, the first Latino-owned brewery in Massachusetts.

"This is such a cute neighborhood," said Aileen de la Torre of Decatur, Georgia. "Even on a cloudy day, it's still vibrant. And I love the idea of The Pryde. It's important for people in the LGBTQ community to have a space where they can live in safety and dignity."



\$1,190.00

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Virtual Public Meeting

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1081 River Street Public Meeting

April 26, 2023
 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/3M5BADZ
 Toll Free: (833) 568-8864
 Meeting ID: 161 769 7548

Project Proponent:
 Whiteacre Properties

Project Description:
 Construction of a new, multifamily residential building of 28 rental units, with 15 onsite parking spaces in a four (4) story building of approximately 27,584 square feet of gross floor area, with related site improvements.

mail to: **Daniel Polanco**
 Boston Planning & Development Agency
 One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
 Boston, MA 02201
 phone: 617.918.4460
 email: dan.polanco@boston.gov
 website: www.bit.ly/1081RiverStreet

Close of Comment Period:
 04/27/2023

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 Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary