

Dorchester Reporter

“The News and Values Around the Neighborhood”

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50¢

WHEN YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, WE ARE THERE WITH YOU.

To our readers:

We are now three weeks into an unprecedented public health emergency. At the *Reporter*, we continue to publish and distribute the newspaper that many people in our community have known and read for decades.

We are committed to continue publishing each week. In fact, we are actually amplifying our reach by putting papers into new places, like supermarkets and select apartment complexes.

We've added a number of new free drops for seniors over the last week – at Keystone, Mattapan Center for Life, Savin Hill Apartments, Lower Mills Apartments, Peabody Apartments, Pasciucco Apts, and Kit Clark Apartments.

Some of Dorchester's finest businesses-
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Chris Lazama, manager of the Lower Mills Apartments, with a copy of last week's Reporter, which was delivered to the building's residents.
Photo courtesy Dave Moreira

Baker warns of a surge in virus peril next week; closing order extended

STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE AND REPORTER STAFF

Now in its third week, the coronavirus health emergency has touched every neighborhood in Boston as the number of known “positive” cases within the city grew to 938 – with 3 deaths— amid a worsening statewide and national crisis.

Massachusetts will remain in a state of emergency for the next month, at minimum, as Governor Charlie Baker warned residents to prepare for a surge in COVID-19 patients needing hospitalization projected to hit the state between next Tuesday (April 7) and Fri., April 17.

The overall number of cases statewide crossed the 5,000 mark Monday and reached 6,620 by Tuesday, according to the state's Department of Public Health. A total of 89 deaths have been attributed to COVID-19 through Tuesday afternoon, an increase of 33 in a single day— the biggest one-day increase in the fatality rate so far.

A week after closing all non-essential businesses to workers and customers, Baker said on Tuesday that he was extending his executive order beyond April 7 to keep most businesses physi-

• Tito Jackson, on the mend, urges: ‘Stay home’ – Page 5

• On the front lines at Harvard Street facility – Page 13

• Sen. Collins pushes bill to protect tenants, homeowners – Page 16

cally closed through at least May 4. (Last Wednesday, he extended his order on the closing of schools until at least that same day.) He also said his order would keep in place the social distancing guidance from the state limiting gatherings to no more than 10 people.

The state was considering taking steps to prevent people from gathering in parks and other public spaces, but stopped short of that while urging everyone to follow the direction on their own. Mayor Walsh gave similar advice and ordered gatherings at basketball and street hockey courts off limits.

“Coronavirus is in each of our neighborhoods,” said Marty Martinez, health and human services chief in Boston, during a Monday press conference at
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Happy Birthday ‘beeps’ for Cole

Cole Kazmowski turned 10 last Sunday, a dreary day weather-wise made much drearier by the “stay at home” directive that made any thought of a party a non-starter. But not for his fourth-grade classmates at St. Brendan's School. As he stood outside his house, above, he could see his party getting under way up the street. Story, Page 7.

Image courtesy Kazmowski family

Iconic Ice Creamsmith finds new ways to serve its loyal customers in Lower Mills

BY DANIEL SHEEHAN REPORTER STAFF

The last few weeks have been a crash course in “changing with the times” for Chris Skillin, who owns the Ice Creamsmith in Lower Mills along with his wife Sarah Mabel-Skillin.

This time of year is normally joyous for the longtime Dot Ave establishment and its loyal customers as they celebrate reopening after a long winter hiatus. On unseasonably mild March days – as much of this month has been – the small shop is usually packed with families eager to try new flavors of homemade ice cream.

“That's when everyone knows we

open,” Skillin said in an interview. “On a beautiful day after school, everyone comes in and hangs out in the store. We have people here talking to us and welcoming us back. So right now we're missing kids coming in, and the smiles on their faces.” But this spring is unlike any other in the 44-year-history of this neighborhood landmark.

As the COVID-19 pandemic and local business restrictions have developed, the couple have been forced to regularly revise their gameplan.

Initially, on March 13, they voluntarily closed down the shop and

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Mission Accomplished. Tom Tinlin picks up the package of goods he ordered online from The Ice Creamsmith. Photo courtesy Tom Tinlin

A crackdown on group sports at city parks

BY KATIE TROJANO REPORTER STAFF

To those gathering to play sports at the city's parks, Mayor Walsh had this to say last Friday: “That's not social distancing. If this doesn't change, I'm going to start naming locations in the city of Boston so that people know you shouldn't be there.”

On Monday, Ryan Woods, the city's Parks and Recreation commissioner, followed up on

the mayor's criticism: “We're seeing people playing everything from soccer to basketball, street hockey, and tennis. So, this week we've zip-tied the basketball nets and ordered new signage that will promote social distancing and discourage contact sports. The signage will arrive Tuesday and be installed at our parks throughout the week.”

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A crackdown on group sports at city parks

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Walsh has been outspoken about his concerns about group sports continuing in recent days. In a press availability on Sunday, he warned, “Our last effort is to lock the parks down, and we don’t want to lock them down.”

Woods said that the parks remain open for “passive use. Our staff is still emptying trash barrels and continuing upkeep. We’re just asking for the public to listen to the mayor’s guidelines and keep to social distancing while in the parks.”

Play structures are off-limits, and the city has also shut down both municipal golf courses — the William Devine Golf Course at Franklin Park and the George Wright Golf Course in Hyde Park.

Walsh has also ordered a citywide halt on construction for the duration of the public health emergency, which means



a pause on renovations to Dorchester’s Garvey Park and the Downer Ave. playground.

Parks and Recreation employees will continue to pay attention to city-wide park construction sites. “We closed up our construction at park and playground sites, but we are still doing preventative maintenance,” said Woods. “For example, if there’s a dead or dying tree or any other potentially hazardous component at a site, our teams will address that maintenance.”

Woods added: “The



A Boston Parks and Recreation employee applies a zip-tie to a basketball net at a city park. Photo courtesy City of Boston Parks and Recreation Dept.

good thing with Garvey is that it was ahead of schedule because of the mild winter that we had. Before all of this we had expected it would open earlier, maybe by the

end of June. This has obviously created some delays and now we’re looking at more of an August or September timeline, although we don’t know ... for sure

until the ban is lifted.”

He added that before the virus outbreak, Downer Ave. Playground had been slated for completion in late April or early May, but that will

now be delayed.

Planning initiatives will also likely see some delays, although, Woods said, “we are exploring some possible virtual meetings to keep things on track,” he said, while noting that larger planning efforts — like the Franklin Park Master plan — wouldn’t be good candidates for online planning.

The first Franklin Park Master Plan meeting took place in early February, and drew a large crowd of participants to the Devine Memorial Golf Clubhouse. A second planning session originally slated for April has been postponed.

“What we are doing in terms of Franklin Park,” said Woods, “is continuing to push out our survey through social media and encouraging people to take it,” said Woods. “People can also visit franklinpark-masterplan.com to see more information on the effort.”

To our readers:

(Continued from page 1) es and institutions are stepping up to support us, including the Martin W. Richard Foundation, Carney Hospital, Members Plus Credit Union, Accordia Partners, Codman Square Health Center, Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester, Corcoran Jennison Companies, City of Boston Credit Union, American Provi-

sions, Feeney Brothers Excavation, Maneikis Companies, East Boston Savings Bank, Eire Pub, Mattapan Community Health Center, and many more.

They all recognize the importance of keeping community journalism alive and well — especially right now.

Mayor Walsh — in his daily briefings — has

repeatedly emphasized the need for people to rely on trusted media sources — including newspapers — to guide public behavior and safety measures. People are taking that advice by our measurements:

We’ve seen unprecedented traffic to our website — DotNews.com — and social media channels, mainly because we’ve been doing important journalism, including breaking news

about Carney Hospital’s plan to become the nation’s first dedicated COVID-19 facility; the challenges facing health centers; providing expert context on public health from a local perspective; the role of city government in maintaining order and direction; and the impacts to local businesses.

Our coverage is providing essential information in this fast-moving emergency. And we’re working closely with partners like WBUR, State House News Service, and BNN-TV to bring context

about what is happening on the ground here in our neighborhoods.

Our work has also been highlighted by national media: Last week, Lawrence O’Donnell directed his viewers on MSNBC’s *The Last Word* with Lawrence O’Donnell to check out our coverage of Gaby Araica’s efforts to make face masks for health care workers in our neighborhood.

We remain a viable, trusted vehicle to get messaging out quickly to our loyal readers.

We’ve also seen a number of new subscribers in

recent days from people who want to support our efforts. That has been a great help to us, since that will help to finance our efforts to get more papers into the hands of people — especially older neighbors — who have found themselves isolated at home.

We feel our mission is even more important in this time of crisis and hardship. To all of our readers: Please stay safe and healthy and let us know how we can be of assistance in the days and weeks to come.

- Bill Forry

WATER MAIN FLUSHING NOTICE



Boston Water and Sewer Commission will begin Water Main Flushing in parts of the Dorchester area starting on **April 5 through April 8, 2020.**

The boundaries for the areas being flushed are: Columbia Rd to the north, Victory Rd and Centre St to the south, I-93 and Dorchester Bay to the East and Washington St to the west.

The purpose of the Water Main Flushing Program is to improve drinking water quality for residents and businesses.

Water Main flushing will take place between the hours of **10:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M.**

The flushing process may cause discolored water and a reduction in pressure. The discoloration of the water will be temporary and is not harmful. If the condition persists, please contact BWSC’s 24 Hour Service at (617) 989-7000.

BWSC appreciates your patience as we work to improve the quality of drinking water we will provide to the residents and businesses of Boston

If you have any questions, contact BWSC’s Night Operations Manager at (617) 989-7000 or visit our website at www.bwsc.org.

Coming Up at the Boston Public Library

Adams Street

690 Adams Street • 617-436-6900

Codman Square

690 Washington Street • 617-436-8214

Fields Corner

1520 Dorchester Avenue • 617-436-2155

Lower Mills

27 Richmond Street • 617-298-7841

Uphams Corner

500 Columbia Road • 617-265-0139

Grove Hall

41 Geneva Avenue • 617-427-3337

Mattapan Branch

1350 Blue Hill Avenue, Mattapan • 617-298-9218

Boston Public Library COVID-19 UPDATE

The Boston Public Library issued this guidance on March 16, 2020.

At this point, there are few people who have not been impacted in some way by the COVID-19 virus. Here at the Boston Public Library, we are doing everything in our power to continue to bring you important services.

All locations closed

As of 6 p.m. Monday, March 16, all BPL locations are closed until further notice. All online services will remain available.

All events cancelled

As a preventative measure to minimize the spread of COVID-19, all Boston Public Library programs and events have been cancelled. This includes all events — classes, programs, and workshops — at all of our branches.

As always, we are closely following the directives of the City of Boston and the Boston Public Health Commission.

Don’t worry about due dates

The BPL has waived all library fines through May 1.

In addition, all books will be automatically renewed for an addi-

tional 15 weeks, and any library cards that were to expire in March and April have had their expiration dates extended to October.

Online resources

We are also able to provide you with additional options from books to skill training online at bpl.org.

We invite you to explore our extensive offerings, including the ability to stream and download the diverse content available through applications like Kanopy and Hoopla, or to learn new skills with lynda.com. We can also help you with personalized reading recommendations through Shelf-Service.

If you don’t have a library card yet or your account has expired, learn how to get an eCard.

And if you have research questions, the team at ask@bpl.org is also here to help.

Keep each other safe
We all have a role to play in protecting our communities and mitigating the spread of coronavirus. Please also visit boston.gov and bphc.org for the latest updates.