

SOMERVILLE/STATE SIDE

An e.newsletter from State Representative Denise Provost
Vol. 1, No. 1

March 6, 2006

SOMERVILLE AT LARGE

An e.newsletter from Denise Provost, Alderman-at-Large
Vol. 6, No. 2

Welcome to our first "transitional" issue, reporting on selected happenings in both state and local government. Since some issues involve both levels, my division is somewhat arbitrary, so check both Tables of Contents to locate your area of interest.

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1) LNG FACILITY ON HARBOR ISLAND? PUBLIC HEARING...

What?

Outer Brewster is one of the Boston Harbor Islands, which collectively constitute a National Recreation Area, part of the federal National Parks System. It's the easternmost of a cluster of islands that include of Little Brewster, home of historic Boston Light. While these islands are in the National Parks system, they belong to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. There is a bill currently before the Legislature - House 4500 - which would grant a long term lease of Outer Brewster to a private company to develop a facility for the storage and transportation of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

No, I'm serious. I didn't believe it at first, either. But I heard about it from a constituent, and have read the bill. Last Tuesday, along with a majority of House members, I voted to create a Commission to study the proposed sitings of LNG facilities in Massachusetts. Yet House 4500 has a life of its own, and is moving right along.

When?

The next move for this bill is to a public hearing, scheduled for Weds. March 8, 2006, at 11 am, in Room B-2 of the State House. Call the office of Committee Chairman, Rep. Brian Dempsey (D., Haverhill), at 617-722-2263. Rep. Dempsey is one of H. 4500's co-sponsors.

2) GREEN LINE EXTENSION DEVELOPMENTS

The Good News

A couple of weeks ago, the combined Somerville/Medford delegation met with Chief of Commonwealth Development Doug Foy. It was the meeting of our dreams. I asked Foy - always a strong proponent of the extended Green Line - whether the project would be in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in the fall, with an identified funding source. He replied that it would, and would be funded by half a billion dollars in the Governor's Transportation Bond Bill. He also stated that the project, apart from the Union Square stop, was still scheduled for completion by its 2011 deadline.

The Bad News

As you probably know by now, Doug Foy resigned his post in the Romney administration just days after the meeting described above. What his departure means for the Green Line extension remains to be seen. It demonstrates that no apparent "victory" has been achieved until a project actually is constructed.

Foy and his staff also confirmed bad news which has been circulating in the rumor mill for months: that most, if not all, of the railroad bridges over the Lowell Line tracks are too small to accommodate the Green Line extension. This lack of capacity extends even to our not-quite-completed, reconstructed Lowell Street Bridge. Foy minimized the impact of this lack of coordinated planning between state agencies, emphasizing instead the need in future to coordinate transportation projects with each other, and with land use planning generally.

The Bottom Line

I assure you that, whether changes occur in the Romney administration, the Green Line extension through Somerville remains at the top of my priority list, and I will continue to advocate vociferously that every part of Doug Foy's parting commitment be met.

3) SOMERVILLE AVENUE RINK UPDATE

Another of the Governor's initiatives is to put Somerville's Veterans' Memorial Rink (among others) out for long-term lease to the private sector, as a part of the FY 2007 budget process. Along with other members of the Somerville delegation, and with the Mayor and Aldermen, I have been working to develop successful tactics for keeping as much local control as possible over the rink,

while trying to provide for much-needed capital improvements.

One change we will be seeking in the Legislature is addition of a clause that would give the city the right of first refusal in the bid process. We know how much Somerville values its skating rink, and the programs that use the rink. We will do whatever we can to put Somerville in optimum bargaining position for the rink's future.

4) OWN A HOME? IMPORTANT NEW LAW TO KNOW ABOUT

A. Carbon Monoxide Alarms: New Law that Affects Your Home

As of March 31st, homeowners and landlords are required to install carbon monoxide detectors:

-WHY: carbon monoxide (CO) is an "invisible killer," an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas that results in injuries and deaths each year.

-WHERE: in every level of their homes/buildings except for basements and attics that do not have habitable living spaces and within 10 feet of bedroom doors

-WHAT KIND: if you have questions about what types of CO alarms comply with this new law or about symptoms of CO poisoning, please attend tomorrow's seminar or contact the Somerville fire department

B. Free Seminar Tomorrow

When: Tuesday, March 7, 6:30-7:30pm

Where: Anthony's Function Hall, 156 Highland Ave (corner of Central and Highland) (free parking in both Anthony's lots)

What: Seminar on how to comply with this new law. Hear from a representative of the Somerville Fire Dept. and a real estate attorney. Receive coupons to purchase discounted carbon monoxide detectors.

RSVP: to Thalia Tringo (co-sponsor of event) 617-245-3902

In SOMERVILLE AT LARGE:

1) MAGOUN SQUARE REVITALIZATION MEETING TONIGHT

Plans unveiled by the administration and Ward Alderman, for public discussion, at the VNA Community Room, Mon. 3/6, 6:30 pm.

2) ST. POLYCARP'S COMMUNITY MEETING TONIGHT

The Somerville Community Corp. (SCC) has bought the former St. Polycarp's campus at Mystic Ave. and Temple Street. Come to SCC's meeting on Mon., 3/6, from 6:30 to 8 pm, in the Healey School Cafetorium, 5 Meachum St., to discuss plans and offer feedback. "This meeting is primarily for Winter Hill and Ten Hills residents," says SCC.

3) MAXPACK DEVELOPMENT NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Tuesday, 3/7, at 6:30 pm at the VNA Community Room. Will the developers finally unveil their plans? Come and find out...

4) AFFORDABLE HOUSING ORGANIZING COMMITTEE (AHOC) MEETING

On Weds., 3/8, from 6:30 to 8 pm, AHOC will meet at the Somerville Community Corp. office, at 1 Davis Square, to discuss practical ways of increasing the stock of affordable housing in Somerville.

5) SPECIAL EVENT AT CENTRAL LIBRARY

Sunday (yes, Sunday) March 12, at 2 pm, enjoy refreshments, music, and children's activities while learning about planned improvements to library service. "A great city deserves a great library."

6) AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

The Somerville Community Corp. is constructing 15 2 and 3 bedroom condominium units on Temple Street for first time home buyers with low or moderate incomes. There will be an information session for anyone interested on Tues., 3/14, in the Aldermen's Chamber at City Hall, 93 Highland Ave. For the time of the meeting, more information, or to get an application, call Katie at 617-776-5931 x 241, or visit:

www.somervillecdc.org