



Boston Bulletin

citywide news • street by street

VOLUME 18 NUMBER 48

NOVEMBER 28, 2024

FREE

Veterans Honored in WR

Ariane Komyati
Staff Reporter

Strolling or driving down Centre Street in West Roxbury recently, you may have noticed the new banners honoring local Veterans, displaying their faces and names. The 71 banners were installed just in time for Veterans Day.

A few months ago, West Roxbury Main Streets (WRMS) announced it would be participating in the Home-town Heroes Banner Program, a community initiative honoring past and present members of the U.S. Armed Forces. WRMS used fliers and social media to spread the word, which generated significant community interest.

“There were a lot of phone calls and emails,” said Lindsey Chase, the Executive Director of WRMS. She said she hopes that Main Streets can fund or subsidize the Veteran banners in the future.

Some families turned the banner display into a special outing. Among them was the Kennedy family, who surprised U.S. Army Veteran James P. Kennedy by honoring him with his own banner.

“He was so touched and we are so grateful for his service,” stated WRMS.

The banners display a photo, name, branch of service, and credentials. Some of the many, and perhaps recognizable faces include Lance Cpl. Richie Gormley, Corpo-



James P. Kennedy with his banner on Centre Street.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WEST ROXBURY MAIN STREETS

ral Michael Boccuzzi, Anthony Festa, Captain Kenneth Phalan, Cpl. Thomas Keenan Jr., Thomas Keenan Sr., Cpl. Richard Davis, Cpl. Robert Kane, PFC Elizabeth Howden Denekamp, Herman Denekamp, James Kennedy, Patrick Flaherty, Specialist Robert MacGregor, and Michael Shor.

Elizabeth “Betty” Howden Denekamp, a WR resident and former private first class (PFC) in the Marine Corps

during World War II, embodied the motto “Semper Fi” throughout her life. Her service was honored with an Honor Flight to Washington, D.C., where she met Commandant Amos and toured the WWII Memorial. Denekamp was an active member of the Women’s Marine Association Baystate Chapter, dedicated her time volunteering at the VA Hospital in WR, and was

Veteran Banners
Continued on page 4



The CBPD held its second Ideas Reception at the Hyde Park Munie recently.

PHOTO BY MATT MACDONALD

Two events, one disconnect S+S in Cleary Square

Matt MacDonald
Staff Reporter

On Nov. 14 and 16, two separate but linked public events were held regarding Squares + Streets (S+S) – the City’s comprehensive and controversial planning and zoning initiative.

The first was organized by a resident ad hoc committee formed to address neighborhood concerns with the initiative. The second was hosted by the City of Boston Planning Department (CBPD), which has been tasked with creating the policy and is now bringing it to realization.

While both focused on the S+S community planning process for Hyde Park’s Cleary Square, they also illustrated an apparent lack of connectivity between City Hall and the neigh-

S+S Petition
Continued on page 10

Mural/ housing keeps JPNDC busy

Richard Heath
Staff Reporter

A new mural in Stonybrook and senior supportive housing at Grove Hall have kept the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPNDC) busy this fall. The new mural will go on the side of Brookley Flats, at 10 Stonley Rd.

Add onto that 3371 Washington St., the four-story, 39-unit senior supportive housing, in collaboration with New Atlantic Development, of which the concrete elevator shaft and ground-floor iron framing are complete five months after groundbreaking. Next door, at the former craft brewery, landlord Monty Gold has spruced up his building with a fresh coat of light blue paint.

The Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA) unsuccessfully contested the four-story, 45-unit residence, then called 45

JPNDC Stay Busy
Continued on page 2



Liz LaManche and her preferred mural design for the JPNC building.



COURTESY PHOTO

Thanksgiving, 1863, vs. Thanksgiving, 2024

Recently I was reading two books about the White House at the very same time: one was Doris Goodwin-Kearns' "An Unfinished Love Story," which details true happenings in the Kennedy and Johnson eras when she and her late husband worked there. The other was a book about the making of Aaron Sorkin's fictional series "West Wing" with Martin Sheen as a U.S. president.

The first book referenced a Thanksgiving ritual instituted by her husband, Dick Goodwin, for Thanksgiving dinner. There he would read President Abraham Lincoln's proclamation in October of 1863 establishing the national holiday of Thanksgiving on the last Thursday of November (which has now been changed to the fourth Thursday to better accommodate merchants by creating a longer interval for shopping between Turkey Day and Christmas)). It is noteworthy that Lincoln established Thanksgiving as the Civil War was raging; also noteworthy is the deep spiritual component of his proclamation, remarkably absent in modern references to this November holiday.

The following is Lincoln's reasoning 161 years ago. See how much of it rings true today.

"The year that is drawing



My Kind of Town/
Joe Galeota

towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military con-

flict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence [sic], have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field [sic]; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom. No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United

Galeota

Continued on page 5

Veteran Banners

continued from page 1

also a member of the Stratford Street United Church. She passed away in 2015.

Cpl. Thomas Keenan Jr. of the Marine Corps was killed in action on Tinian Island in the South Pacific during WWII. He was from WR and is buried at Saint Joseph Cemetery. Keenan was 23 years old.

WRMS plans to install new Veteran banners next November, establishing the Hometown Heroes Banner Program as an annual tradition. "They will stay up for the full year, but it is weather dependent," Chase explained.

WRMS is a "non-profit organization focused on revitalization of the West Roxbury commercial district." You can follow them on Facebook at facebook.com/westroxburymainstreets, or on Instagram @westroxburymainstreets.

West Roxbury's younger generations are also helping preserve the legacy of local veterans. Michael Gallagher, a Catholic Memorial School alum who is currently a freshman at Fairfield University, created a documentary spotlighting the lives of the men and women commemorated with Hero Squares in WR. Last September, his 91-minute film premiered at the Dedham Community Theatre.

Gallagher grew up enjoying making YouTube videos with his friends, and aspired to create a documentary someday. "One day I was just looking up at a street sign and wondered to myself, 'Who were these men and women on signs around West Roxbury?' Upon further research, I found out that these were 'Hero Squares' that were dedicated to veterans who gave their lives for us," he explained.

Gallagher knew that a documentary was the perfect medium to learn more about these local heroes and share their legacies. The 91-minute film took roughly six months to complete.

A Hero Square is a designated intersection or square honoring the memory of a fallen service member. The gold star on each sign symbolizes the ultimate sacrifice and is reserved for service members killed in action. There are 46 in WR - these heroes fought in WWI, WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Iraq.

Gallagher's documentary takes a deep dive into the stories behind the names etched on the squares, starting with a look at the local heroes of World War I. At the intersection of Centre St. and Belgrade Ave., a Hero Square honors Corporal Harold Keefe, whose story was narrated by his great-nephew, Kevin Keefe. Accompanied by early 20th-century photographs, Kevin recounted Harold's life, including a heartfelt letter he wrote to his brother. Harold Keefe lived on Mt. Vernon Street when he enlisted in the National Guard in 1916 at the age of 20. He transitioned to federal service in March 1917. Tragically, after being wounded a few weeks prior, he succumbed to his injuries in June 1918 in France. He was only 22 years old.

The documentary features all 46 stories, brought to life through narration by family members and local WR community members. Contributors included local politicians, pastors, school principals, community leaders, business owners, and journalists, Celebrities with ties to WR, including retired NHL hockey player Chris Nilan and author William Martin, also helped tell these stories. Gallagher was able to track down the family members of the veterans through social media and an article in a local paper. "Social media really helped promote my project, and it ended up reaching a vast majority of the family members," he remarked.

The film concludes with the story of Kyran Kennedy, whose Hero Square is located at the corner of Wren and Robin St., near the stately Victorian home where he grew up. His sister, Maura Messinger, gave a heartfelt narration of his life, which was accompanied by childhood photos. Kennedy was deployed to Iraq in Feb. 2003 and in Nov. 2003 he was the co-pilot of a Black Hawk helicopter that was shot down by enemy fire near Tikrit, Iraq. Kennedy was killed along with five fellow soldiers. He was 43 years old and survived by his wife and three young kids. Kennedy was posthumously awarded a Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

Kennedy's story left a lasting impression on Gallagher. "He [Kennedy] was the brother of one of my high school teachers," he stated. "The story instantly became personal to me because I had a real life connection, and it really opened my eyes to the magnitude of death and what it does to a family."

This documentary reflects Gallagher's dedication to preserving these stories for future generations. "Hero Square of West Roxbury" can be watched here: <https://tinyurl.com/3fpbf3t>

We are offering two special penthouse units in highly desirable locations



425 S. Huntington Ave., J.P.

2 Br. 1 Ba. — 820 sq. ft.

Sky line views

On street parking

\$469,900



97 Anderer Lane, West Roxbury

2 Br 2 Ba — 1240 sq. ft.

If you have family here this weekend check out this great condo.

Conservation forest views, elevator, balcony, garage under parking, fireplace. \$690,000



Aliza Dash

Hammond Residential Real Estate
Senior Real Estate Associate, SRES
826 Boylston Street | Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
C. 617.818.3066 | O. 617.731.4644
ADash@Hammondre.com
AlizaDashRealEstate.com



Jan Crosby

Hammond Residential
Broker Associate
617-699-1668
jcrosby@hammondre.com

