

The Hyde Park Bulletin

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Parents and teachers are all concerned about the reopening plan for the Boston Public Schools, including the Boston Latin School.

COURTESY PHOTO

BPS reopening plan elicits a mixed bag of reactions

Greta Gaffin
Staff Reporter

Boston Public Schools (BPS) released their spring school re-opening plan in January, and reactions have been extremely mixed. Some BPS students, such as those with severe disabilities, have been in person since the fall, but all other students have been fully remote.

The current plan for non-high priority students is to phase in grades throughout the month of March using a hybrid learning system (two days in-person, two days remote with one day for cleaning). For the full BPS re-opening plan, go to <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/>

reopening.

Students who wish to remain remote can do so. One confusing aspect of the plan to many about the reopening plan was why be open now when cases are so much higher than they were in the fall? Last summer, BPS said that if the COVID-19 positivity rate was above 4 percent, they would ask the Boston Public Health Commission to decide whether or not schools should be open. But Boston was using a cumulative rate of positivity instead of a seven-day or 14-day average until November, meaning that they were including all cases since March. The state's report of the positivity rate in September 2020 in Boston was at .94 percent — as opposed to the

most Jan. 28 positivity rate of 3.23 percent.

Many said they feel that BPS continuing to be closed is not in line with BPS' stated goal of improving racial equity. They argue children from poorer families who do not have access to lots of resources, and especially children who are not native English speakers are especially being harmed.

While the city did send out Chromebooks, for many students they were not available until the end of October, meaning they missed out on two months of instruction.

Some parents have been in a battle with the Boston

BPS

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Residents are concerned that a development on Crane Ledge on the Hyde Park and Roslindale line could take away scenic views from residents.

COURTESY PHOTO

Consalvo, Arroyo address community at WFHCG forum

Mary Ellen Gambon
Staff Reporter

Local officials state Rep. Rob Consalvo and District 5 City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo addressed an audience of 40 concerned residents at a virtual forum hosted by the West Fairmount Hill Community Group (WFHCG) on Mon. Jan. 25. At-Large Councilor Annessa Essaibi-George also participated.

Creating partnerships and being accountable to the community were recurring themes. Development was a key issue, and both Arroyo and Consalvo addressed this by working to

create a master plan for Hyde Park.

“What I have found is this is something that the City wants,” Arroyo said. “Roslindale wants this. Mattapan wants this. This isn't just a Hyde Park issue. This is something that I consider a priority for myself.”

He added that development needs to be looked at for its impact on the community as a whole, “not as a project-by-project thing.” City and state officials can work in tandem to help facilitate this process.

Forum

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Seed Retail Cannabis Shop opens in Feb. at Hyde Square

Richard Heath
Staff Reporter

Core Empowerment gave an update to the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) on Jan. 26 about the imminent opening of its retail cannabis store Seed at 401 Centre St. next to Whole Foods.

This was a virtual meeting, but it seemed just as hostile as its last in-person meeting with the council on Oct. 22, 2019.

In the planning phase, which went on for over two

years, Core is set to get its certificate to operate from the state Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) on Feb. 11, according to CEO April Arrasate.

“We plan to open shortly thereafter,” she told the council. “In three days or two weeks depending on when we get our license. We plan a late February opening.”

It will be the first cannabis shop to open in Jamaica Plain.

In preparation for opening, Seed and the JPNC in collaboration with the Office of Returning Citizens held a one-

hour virtual job fair for retail positions on Jan. 29.

The 6,000 square-foot basement space, formerly the Milky Way Lounge that closed in 2008, was built out in late summer and fall and named Seed.

Arrasate said that Seed is the store name but is operated by Core Empowerment.

“It's one of the largest cannabis spaces in the Boston area,” she said. “We've spent a lot of time and energy improv-

Seeds

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The new Seed storefront entrance at Hyde Square, which will be the first cannabis establishment in JP.

PHOTO BY RICHARD HEATH

Forum continued from page 1

"I think the need is critical," Consalvo added. "Most other neighborhoods around the city that have gone through development had a master planning process initiated by the City and the Boston Planning and Development Agency to ensure that there is community voice and a thoughtful plan of what responsible development should look like moving forward."

HPNA president Jim Kirker brought up that his organization has established a planning and zoning committee, which he hoped could collaborate on this initiative. One goal was to hold forums on the zoning code, which WFHCG co-chair Marcia Kimm Jackson embraced.

An upcoming proposed project that brought the need for both planning and conservation to the forefront is at 990 American Legion Hwy. Ten acres of land on Crane's Ledge is proposed for development, according to community activist Mimi Turchinetz. It is located behind the Walgreen's.

"It in fact brings together a lot of the issues that we're so concerned about," she stressed. "It's an economic justice issue. It's a green issue. It reflects that there's no real planning strategy in Hyde Park."

Health equity was another major concern that both Arroyo and Consalvo addressed. COVID-19 brought this neighborhood's shortcomings into sharp focus when it was at or near the top of the list of neighborhoods affected by the pandemic, yet only recently got a mobile testing site.

Arroyo, the chair of the council's Public Health Committee, said he is "incredibly unhappy" about the lack of COVID-19 vaccine distribution in the neighborhoods he represents. He will be holding a City Council hearing in February on this issue.

The need for a health center in Hyde Park was mentioned several times by both residents and the officials.

Education was also a key topic. When Arroyo was asked if he supported an elected or appointed School Committee, he said what he would actually prefer is a hybrid model comprised of elected representatives and appointed experts within specific realms of education, such as autism or language specialties.

"I think if we do a hybrid, we can have the best of both worlds," he said.

Essaibi-George noted the importance of the student representative on the School Committee, saying that person should get paid the same \$7,500 stipend as the adult counterparts. She also weighed in on the issue of racial justice.

"So much of these conversations are happening in our schools, mostly virtually" she said. "That really needs to be a big part of where these conversations exist, not just in the community. It also has to be more than just the token book club or a lunchtime, once a week conversation."

On open space, Consalvo said he has hit the ground running, meeting with the Southwest Boston Community Development Corporation (SWBCDC) on renovating Doyle Playground and also working to protect Fowl Meadow from illegal dumping.

Kimm Jackson, who hosted the meeting, celebrated some of her group's recent achievements before the elected officials spoke about their goals for Hyde Park. Graphic illustrator Muddy Schlegel from the Whiteboard Academy recorded the meeting visually through a storyboard.

WFHCG leader Nathaniel Thomas announced that a long-held dream of the organization was on the verge of becoming reality. Since 2018, he has been working to obtain Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding, and he recently heard that the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is recommending funding for the renovation of Moynihan Playground in the amount of \$200,000.

Thomas noted that there was a significant community letter-writing campaign in favor of the project as well as support from Consalvo. The committee will vote on the recommendation and then it will go before the City Council and the mayor for approval.

Once that process is complete, Thomas added that WFHCG can apply for an up to an additional \$150,000 from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for matching funding.

"If you go around Readville and if you go around Kelly Field and then you come over here, you can see that this playground down the street hasn't been modernized yet," he said.

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail!)
Oh, most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this necessity. Oh Star of the Sea, help me and show me herein you are my mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech thee from the bottom of my heart to succor me in my necessity (make request). There are none that can withstand your power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (three times). Holy Mary, I place this cause in your hands (three times). Say this prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish and it will be granted to you.
—S.G.H.

Novena to St. Clare

Ask St. Clare for three favors, 1 business, 2 impossible. Say nine Hail Marys for nine days, with lighted candle. Pray whether you believe or not. Publish on the ninth day. Powerful novena. Say "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be praised, adored, glorified, now and forever, throughout the whole world. Amen." *Your request will be granted, no matter how impossible it may seem.*
—S.G.H.

Novena to St. Jude

Oh Holy St. Jude Apostle and Martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, near Kinsman of Jesus Christ faithful intercessor of all who invoke your special patronage in time of need, to you I have recourse from the depths of my heart and humbly beg to whom God has given such great power to come to my assistance. Help me in my present and urgent petition. In return I promise to make your name known and cause you to be invoked. Say three Our Fathers, three Hail Marys and three Glorias. Publication must be promised. St. Jude pray for us and all who invoke your aid. Amen. *This must be said for nine consecutive days. This Novena has never been known to fail.*
—S.G.H.



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