

The Week's News!



keeps our community ticking!

January 24-30, 2026

Kings of Swing play to full house at Stanley Senior Center

BY STEVE MILMORE • AROUND TOWN • JANUARY 25, 2026



Stoke Therapeutics picks Waltham for expanded headquarters as city's life sciences sector grows

BY WILLIAM HOLDER • BUSINESS • JANUARY 29, 2026



Stoke Therapeutics will move into the top two floors of the newly built six-story foot lab at 245 Fifth Ave. in Waltham.

The Waltham Times is Waltham's local news publication, currently available online only. This printed compendium of articles is produced by volunteers for readers who prefer hardcopy. We aim to have an official printed edition of The Waltham Times in the future, dependent of raising sufficient revenue through donations, grants and advertising to cover the cost of printing.



P.O. Box 540109 | Waltham, MA 02454

WalthamTimes.org | info@walthamtimes.org

Stoke Therapeutics picks Waltham for expanded headquarters as city's life sciences sector grows

BY WILLIAM HOLDER • BUSINESS • JANUARY 29, 2026



Stoke Therapeutics will move into the top two floors of the newly built six-story foot lab at 245 Fifth Ave. in Waltham.

The biotechnology company Stoke Therapeutics, currently located in Bedford, has announced plans to move its headquarters into a 98,500-square-foot facility at 245 Fifth Ave. in Waltham, doubling its space.

The move is scheduled to take place later this year and will place the company on the top two floors of a newly built six-story, 252,544-square-foot lab developed by Anchor Line Partners on what was formerly a surface parking lot.

Anchor Line described the lease as one of the largest in Boston area life sciences over the past year.

“Waltham has emerged as one of the most compelling suburban life sciences hubs in the country, offering scale, talent and connectivity outside the urban core,” Anchor Line said in a statement.

Although not a record for biotech leases – Novo Nordisk has a lease for 166,000 square-feet at 50-60 Sylvan Road – the Stoke lease is the largest among biotech companies signed since January 2025, according to the Waltham Assessor’s office.

Stoke currently employs 170 people and is growing rapidly, chief financial officer Thomas Leggett told the Boston Globe. The Globe noted that the lease is “a bright spot amid a glut of empty lab space across the region.” More than a third of the square footage devoted to life sciences along Route 128 near the Massachusetts Turnpike is reported to be vacant.

Using RNA therapies to treat nervous system and eye diseases

Stoke and its partner Biogen are in late-stage testing of the drug Zorevunersen, a therapy aimed at treating patients with Dravet syndrome.

Dravet syndrome is a severe developmental disease characterized by recurrent seizures as well as significant cognitive and behavioral impairments. It is most often caused by a genetic mutation that leads to insufficient levels of a protein in neuronal cells, according to the company's website. Up to 20 percent of children afflicted with the syndrome die before adulthood.

Dravet syndrome afflicts an estimated 38,000 people worldwide, and there are no approved disease-modifying therapies.

Stoke, which has partnered with Biogen in the development of Zorevunersen, recently announced accelerated

timelines for the completion of Phase 3 testing, which will support submission of a New Drug Application to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The company describes its mission as dedicated to restoring protein levels by harnessing the body's potential with RNA medicine. Its focus is on diseases of the central nervous system and eye that are caused by a lack of normal

protein levels. RNA therapies instruct cells to make the missing proteins. Drugs to treat other conditions are at earlier stages of development.

Stoke reported that it had \$391.7 million in cash, cash equivalents and marketable securities as of the end of 2025. Combined with proceeds from the Biogen collaboration, the company says these funds are sufficient to support operations into 2028.

Anchor Line said that the Fifth Avenue property is LEED Gold and Wired Score Platinum certified, underscoring a commitment to sustainability. Anchor Line Partners is a Boston-based investment firm with \$1.2 billion of commercial real estate assets under management.

ICE arrests Waltham woman with pending charges in connection with July shooting and stabbing

BY ISABELLA LAPRIORE • PUBLIC SAFETY • JANUARY 29, 2026

Gaby Sandoval-Matute, 31, of 83 Lexington St., Waltham, was arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ahead of a pretrial hearing scheduled for Jan. 28.

Sandoval-Matute is charged with conspiracy, two counts of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, assault with a firearm, two counts of assault with a dangerous weapon, carrying a loaded firearm without a license, carrying a firearm without a license, possession of a firearm without a firearm identification card and discharging a firearm within 500 feet of a building in connection to a July shooting and stabbing.

According to Michael Reinhardt, the defendant's attorney, Sandoval-Matute's bail was lowered from \$7,500 to \$1,000 at a hearing on Dec. 23, and she was arrested by ICE after posting bail at the Middlesex Correctional Institute in Framingham.

Sandoval-Matute was taken into custody between Dec. 23 and Jan. 28, according to court filings and is currently held at the Wyatt Detention Facility in Central Falls, R.I., Reinhardt said.

Waltham District Court Judge Jason Chan ordered a default warrant issued for Sandoval-Matute's arrest after she did not appear for the scheduled pretrial hearing on Jan. 28.

Charges against Sandoval-Matute's co-defendant, Justo Murillo Sanchez, 38, of 83 Lexington St., Waltham, were moved to Middlesex Superior Court following his indictment in December. He remains held without bail on dangerousness at the Middlesex Jail in Billerica.

Additional court actions

Due to inclement weather on Jan. 26, Judge Ellen M. Caulo rescheduled hearings for Thomas James Verdini, 20, of 25 Crescent St., Waltham, Christian Jose Alvarado, 22, of 31 Middlesex Circle, Waltham, and Tyler McDonald, 32, of 65 Lake St., Waltham. Hearings for Verdini and Alvarado were scheduled for March 16 and a hearing for McDonald was set for Feb. 9.

Chan also rescheduled to Feb. 9 a status review hearing for Joseph Keane Jr., 36, homeless, of Waltham, initially scheduled for Jan. 28. Middlesex Superior Court issued a warrant for Keane's arrest after he failed to appear for an arraignment on Jan. 6. Keane is charged with multiple assault, motor vehicle operation, weapon and drug possession to distribute charges, including methamphetamine trafficking. The defendant's Superior Court arraignment was rescheduled for Feb. 3. He is scheduled to appear for a status review hearing on Feb. 9. at Waltham District Court.

All information for this story was gathered from court proceedings and official court documents at Waltham District Court and case information from masscourts.org.

Waltham resident calls out councilor Bill Hanley in email to mayor

BY STEVE MILMORE • COMMUNITY • JANUARY 29, 2026

An email to Mayor Jeannette A. McCarthy started a scuttlebutt about Councilor Bill Hanley's behavior at a recent high school hockey game.



The Breakaway Ice Center in Tewksbury where the WHS Hawks played against the Tewksbury team. Courtesy of Breakaway Ice Center.

Mike Peterson, Waltham middle school teacher and former WHS baseball coach, sent an email to the mayor, all members of the City Council and Waltham Public Schools on Jan. 19.

In it, he said Hanley was escorted out of the Jan. 17 Tewksbury vs. Waltham hockey game by police because his conduct did not comply with spectator guidelines.

Although Peterson stated he was not at the game – and was not aware of the circumstances that led to the removal – he was told of Hanley's behavior by people who were there. "The removal of a sitting city councilor by law enforcement from a high school athletic event is concerning and reflects poorly on the city of Waltham," he stated in his email.

Peterson also cited comments made at a Sept. 16, 2024 city council meeting where Hanley talked about accountability and behavioral standards for teachers and athletic coaches who work with students. "The reported events [at the game]...appear inconsistent with the expectations [Hanley] articulated," he wrote.

Peterson ended his email by suggesting Hanley apologize at the next city council meeting to "demonstrate responsibility and help restore trust with members of the Waltham community who were disappointed by what occurred."

Hanley posted a response on social media and said he was surprised the incident had garnered so much attention "based on hearsay."

According to Hanley, he and some Waltham fans were standing in an area with other spectators to watch the game since seats were not available.

"This was a game between two undefeated hockey teams, and the rink was completely packed," he stated. The rink manager approached and told him and the Waltham fans to move from the area, while other spectators were allowed to stay.

"A brief and spirited discussion followed, as others were permitted to remain while those of us wearing Waltham gear were not," according to Hanley. The group then moved to the opposite side of the rink but was asked to leave after the first period.

He ended his statement with: "Regardless of whether I agree with the rink manager's decision, we were standing in an area where we were not permitted and should have moved without objection. This will not happen again." Hanley's full response – and the email itself – is posted on his Facebook account, along with responses from several readers questioning Peterson's motivation and fairness.

Superior Court arraignment held for Waltham man facing multiple assault and large capacity firearm charges

BY ISABELLA LAPRIORE • NEWS • JANUARY 29, 2026



Derek McIver, 34, of 98 Milner St., Waltham pleaded not guilty to 15 assault and firearm related charges at an arraignment at Middlesex Superior Court in Woburn on Jan. 29.

McIver was indicted by a Superior Court grand jury on six counts of assault and battery on a family or household member, five counts of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, two counts of possession of a large-

capacity feeding device, as well as strangulation or suffocation, and violation of an abuse prevention order on Dec. 18.

According to a police report, officers arrested and charged McIver with nine assault related charges after responding to a report of a domestic dispute on Jul. 24. The victim was granted an abuse prevention order issued against McIver later that day.

Additionally, the police report said on Jul. 27 while collecting belongings from the room the two shared, the victim notified officers that she believed McIver was in possession of a firearm, though he denied possessing any firearms or ammunition when a previous abuse prevention order was issued against him in 2024, the report said.

Officers located and seized a 9mm Glock 32 bullet magazine, a PMag Glock 15 bullet magazine, a gun holster and a double-edged knife from a hidden compartment in McIver's bedroom.

McIver has two pending Waltham District Court cases in connection to the July incidents. He remains held without

bail on dangerousness at Middlesex Jail in Billerica and is scheduled to appear at Waltham District Court via Zoom for a probable cause hearing on Feb. 17 and Middlesex Superior Court for a Mar. 25 pretrial hearing.

All information for this story was gathered from court proceedings and official court documents at Waltham District Court and case information from [masscourts.org](https://www.masscourts.org).

Officer Tracey takes on new role at WPD

BY STEVE MILMORE • COMMUNITY • JANUARY 29, 2026



Waltham Police Officer Kristin Tracey has been named the department's new Triad officer.

Tracey, a former school resource officer at Waltham High School for 14 years, is taking over the role from Officer Jon Bailey, who retired this month.

Triad is an alliance of the Waltham police department, the Waltham Council on Aging, and AARP.

The Triad officer provides a variety of law enforcement services to Waltham seniors, including scam prevention and education to improve their quality of life.

In her new role, Tracey plans to introduce a new program called "Seniors Helping Seniors," which will bridge the age gap and

allow WHS students to educate the senior population on technology and computer skills.

"I'm very excited about this new position. It brings a sense of pride and continues the work of my late husband, Paul. As a patrolman, he would always check on his senior citizens and he developed such relationships and trust that I always admired," Tracey said.

Paul Tracey was struck and killed by a car on Dec. 6, 2023, along with National Grid worker Roderick Jackson. A New Hampshire man has been indicted on two counts of murder for their deaths.

License Commission addresses overserving incident at Taste House

BY CYD ABNET • GOVERNMENT • JANUARY 29, 2026

Taste House on Moody Street. Photo by Steve Milmore.



Representatives from Taste House at 275 Moody St. went before the License Commission to discuss an overserving incident that took place earlier this month.

On Jan. 12 at 1:30 a.m., police responded to reports of an unwanted party at the restaurant. Upon arrival, the manager on duty directed the officer to a man who was asleep at the bar. The man woke up but was unable to speak clearly and had red, glassy eyes. Diabetic test strips were visible in the man's bag. Due to this and his apparent intoxication, the man was transported to a local hospital for care.

When the officer interviewed the manager after the incident, she shared that the man had consumed an entire bottle of wine between 11:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m. The manager had served him the bottle assuming he would share the wine alongside a meal with a friend who regularly joined him for dinner. However, his friend did not show up that night. The man proceeded to drink the entire bottle himself and subsequently laid his head down on the bar to sleep. The manager affirmed that she would not be serving the man a bottle of wine again, and the officer reminded her that she was only allowed to serve alcohol until midnight per the restaurant's liquor license.

The commission advised that the restaurant review the rules and regulations of having a liquor license in Waltham and make sure that everyone who is serving alcohol receives TIPS alcohol safety training. Commissioner Kevin Ritcey commended the restaurant for calling the police, saying that it was the right thing to do and they should not hesitate to call the police for any future incidents. Commission chairman Wayne F. Brasco told both the manager and the restaurant owner that the incident was simply a mistake.

"They make millions of pencils every year. They put erasers on the top because people make mistakes," he said. The commission wished the group a happy Lunar New Year and sent them on their way.

In other business, the commission:

- Approved a series of one-day beer and wine permits as requested by Robert Perry of the Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation. The permits will be used for upcoming comedy and music events as well as the annual Breezers Ball on March 14.
- Approved an application for an additional 344 square feet of alcohol storage space at Tico's Corner at 102 Clematis Avenue.

Ringside seats to bot battles at Waltham museum

BY JULIE M. COHEN • COMMUNITY • JANUARY 29, 2026



Drivers prepare their robots for a fight in front of the fans at MassDestruction in August 2025 at Waltham's Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation. Photo by MassDestruction.

In the 2006 film "Rocky Balboa," Sylvester Stallone's famed character advises, "Life's not about how hard of a hit you can give ... it's about how many you can take and still keep moving forward. That's how winning is done."

The same philosophy will be driving the creative competitors at

"MassDestruction Resurgence V: Robot Combat," as they send their small, one-of-a-kind machines into the arena on Jan. 31 at the Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation. Some of the 1- or 3-pound weaponized bots may get pummeled, but their inventors will have to make some quick repairs so they can return to the fight.

"If I were a little kid, I'd be gobsmacked by how much fun it is," said Joe Niedbala, the museum's director of operations.

Hosting the daylong combat event for the fifth time, the museum will welcome competitors of all backgrounds and ages (kids must be accompanied by an adult) vying to topple their opponents in a specially designed 8-foot-by-8-foot arena with a protective roof.

While most of the robot creators and operators are adults, Niedbala said events like MassDestruction can inspire and excite children, showing them that science is fun.

"It's a really good thing to get kids into," said event co-organizer Brandon Zalinsky.

No stranger to inventing machines, Zalinsky competed on the TV series "BattleBots," which is similar to MassDestruction. Currently, he is a member of Omega Team, a group of Boston-area robot enthusiasts. However, he'll be too busy with hosting duties to compete in the upcoming event.

Mighty mini machines

As of late January, 24 "Beetle-weight" (3-pound) bots and 18 "Plastic Ant" (1-pound) bots were signed up to battle it out at MassDestruction.

Similar to boxing matches, each machine will be officially weighed for fairness before the fights begin.

The 1-pounders can only be made from plastic, which Zalinsky said makes them easy to build with a 3D printer and less expensive. The 3-pounders can be made of other materials.

Builders usually have some engineering skills and know how to use hand tools and solder metal together to create their fighters, said Zalinsky.

Before the bouts begin, robots are placed into the “arena” box and turned on, weapon locks are removed and the machines are locked in. When one bot can no longer move, there is a countdown from 10, just like in the boxing ring, to see if it has been “knocked out.” Creators also can “tap out,” if they don’t want their bot to take on any further damage.

Each fight is a full 3 minutes, said Zalinsky. Judges narrow down which bot will continue by deciding which did the most damage and which operator was the most aggressive and demonstrated the most control.



Builders are seen completing safety checks before the January 2025 MassDestruction event at Waltham’s Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation. Photo by Frederick Moore.

Zalinsky said every robot fights three random opponents in its weight class. At the end of that round, the machines are ranked according to how they performed. The top 16 robots then go on to a single elimination bracket and compete until one is left in each weight class.

In addition to giving out awards for the top three 1- and 3-pound competitors, Zalinsky said robot makers also receive honors in such categories as “most destructive,” “best rookie” of the event, and “best repair.”

Asked how he and other participants feel about the possibility that their robots, which they’ve likely spent a lot of time and effort building, could be destroyed in a matter of minutes, Zalinsky said creators “love the process of fixing it and making it better.”

While someone’s design might get torn apart, when they rebuild it, there may be improvements they didn’t anticipate.

“That’s what gets you excited,” he said.

Sometimes a builder will take their destroyed robot, sign it and give it to their opponent. “It’s a cool tradition,” said Zalinsky.

MassDestruction Resurgence V: Robot Combat! Took place on Saturday, Jan. 31 at the Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation, 154 Moody St., Waltham.

Angel Tea brings its own take on bubble tea to Waltham

BY ELLA CHASE, AIKO NJUGUNA & REBECCA SUAREZ • FOOD • JANUARY 29, 2026



In a competitive bubble tea market with name brands, Angel Tea differentiates itself by providing a second home to consumers.

Angel Zhao posing with her bubble tea in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France. Courtesy of Angel Zhao.

Bubble tea shops, otherwise known as boba, have become nearly as common as coffee in downtown Waltham. National chains, small storefronts and student-frequented tea counters line Moody Street, offering similar menus of milk tea, tapioca pearls and fruit-based drinks, each with its own take on flavors.

Angel Tea, located just steps away from major bubble tea chain Kung Fu Tea, is a local, family-owned business that's carving out its own space in a saturated market.

The shop is owned and operated by Angel Zhao, a Lexington resident who opened the cafe in summer 2022 while she was still a college student.

Zhao moved to Massachusetts from China when she was 12 because her parents wanted her to have a better education.

Despite the numerous bubble tea shops around downtown Waltham and the Boston area, Zhao felt there weren't any shops that catered to what she liked. As a native of China, where bubble tea has been popular for years, Zhao felt by comparison the "U.S. didn't have much boba options."

That is when the idea of starting her own bubble tea shop began to take root in her mind. Creating a business from the ground up also gave Zhao an opportunity to help her parents pay for her college tuition. Just as she was beginning to think about embarking on a new endeavor, the spot on Moody Street came up for sale. "It was kind of perfect timing," Zhao recounts, and managing the store has now become her full-time work.

More than a cafe

Zhao said she has never viewed the nearby chain stores as direct competition as she knew she had something unique to offer. "I opened this place knowing Kung Fu Tea is down the street," she said.

To start, she has always had "100 % faith in [her] recipes," all of them her own creation.

Angel Tea offers a broader menu than typical bubble tea shops, serving light meals, desserts and drinks inspired by Zhao's travels and personal background. Many of her menu items reflect this personal touch, from herbal teas influenced by traditional Chinese medicine to beverages with balanced sweetness, offering options that customers can't easily find elsewhere.

The cafe's atmosphere also stands out to customers. "I love that it feels like a true mom-and-pop shop," said Amanda Chappelle, a first-time visitor, noting the lively jazz music and open door that invites passersby to step inside and see for themselves.



The interior of Angel Tea shop, located on Moody Street in Waltham, MA, features murals that Zhao painted herself, allowing her passion for art to continue to shine through – even as a full-time bubble tea shop owner. Photo by Rebecca Suarez.

The decor reflects Zhao’s personality. “All of the graphic designs, including the murals, I’ve painted myself,” Zhao said. “I like to travel every year. This year, I went to Italy, and it inspired me a lot.”

The menu and the cafe’s vibe aren’t the only ways Angel Tea positions itself differently. Zhao has become very involved in community building with Waltham residents. There is a drawing group meetup at Angel Tea every Wednesday, and the plush seats are filled with a Pokémon card group on Thursdays. And on Sundays Zhao hosts art-focused events, ranging from collage nights to pen-and-ink workshops. She said these events give people a break from the fast-paced, stressful routines of everyday life.

“Sometimes we just need to slow down and be in the moment,” she said.

All about community

This emphasis on being a creative, social space may be part of what enables Angel Tea to withstand competition. While chains often rely on standardized menus and brand recognition, Angel Tea’s business model depends on customers returning for the atmosphere and sense of belonging. The cafe has a consistent base of regulars, including students and local families who stay for hours, Zhao said.

According to Marie Reyes, a frequent customer, “Angel Tea stands out with its fruity drinks, menu diversity and comfortable vibe. They recently put out a new line of sparkling boba tea and fruit drinks. This is why I keep coming back.”

Still, operating a business – especially while she was still a college student – has not been without challenges. Zhao said navigating city and state business regulations was particularly difficult early on, describing the work of dealing with departments and sorting out requirements she had never formally been taught. “Starting a business in theory is very different from actually doing it,” she explained.

Now managing the cafe full-time after graduation, Zhao explained that she is focused on continuing to build a strong community around the Waltham location. She is also exploring the possibility of opening future locations near other universities in the Boston area, drawing on the positive response Angel Tea has received from students, young adults, and families in Waltham.

For now, Zhao said that she is prioritizing establishing her brand and the Angel Tea name through marketing and social media. “I think in time, it’ll all come together. I’m not worried about it because I know Angel Tea will make it.”

Caterina Paola, 1945–2026, loving mother and grandmother

BY NEWSROOM • OBITUARY • JANUARY 29, 2026



Caterina Paola (Raso), of Waltham, passed away peacefully on Jan. 24, 2026 at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, surrounded by her loving family. She was 80.

Born on Jul. 26, 1945, in Calabria, Italy, Caterina was the beloved daughter of the late Pasquale and Elena (Caruso) Raso. A woman with strong family values, strength and devotion, Caterina lived her life guided by love, generosity and service to others. She possessed a strong will and an open heart, always ready to help anyone in need, often giving of herself not from abundance, but from compassion and faith.

Family was the single most important part of Caterina's life. Her kindness and warmth were felt by all who knew her, and her home was a place of comfort, laughter, and unconditional love. In her spare time, she found great joy in gardening and cooking, lovingly preparing meals for those

she cherished. She was especially known for her Crispelle (fried dough) chicken cutlets, pasta dishes and her world-famous sauce, which became a treasured symbol of her care and hospitality.

Caterina was predeceased by her beloved husband, Nicola Paola; her dear brother, Francesco Raso; her brothers-in-law, Christofero Ferraro and Elio Scanga; and her son-in-law, Jamaine J. Hunt, Sr.

She is survived by her loving and devoted children: Rosina Lopez and her husband Walter, Pasquale Paola, Marisa

Paola, all of Waltham; Elena Paola of Newton; Francesco Paola and his partner Cara Malone of Waltham; Stefania Paola of Wellesley; Steven Paola and his fiancée Stella Luberto of Marlborough; Susan Paola and her fiancé Aleksander Migdalski of Boston; and Corinna Paola of Waltham. She was the proud and devoted grandmother of 19 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, the true apples of her eye, all of whom brought her endless joy.

Caterina also leaves her loving siblings, with whom she shared a special and enduring bond: Giuseppe Raso and his wife Giulia of Italy; Teresa Scanga of Australia; Maria Ferraro of Australia; Rosaria Raso and her husband Giuseppe of Italy; and her dear sisters-in-law, Maria Paola and Aurelia Raso both of Italy, and Giovanna Paola of Newton; and numerous nieces, nephews and dear friends.

Caterina will be remembered for her unwavering faith, boundless generosity, and the deep love she held for her family. Her legacy lives on in the hearts of all who were blessed to know her.

Relatives and friends remembered the love she shared on Thursday, Jan. 29, in the Main Chapel of Brasco & Sons Memorial Chapels. A mass of Christian burial was celebrated on Friday, Jan. 30, at Sacred Heart Church, 311 River Street, Waltham. Burial was at Calvary Cemetery.

Elizabeth Latour Freeman, 1939–2026, was ‘known for her kindness’ in the community

BY NEWSROOM • OBITUARY • JANUARY 29, 2026



Elizabeth (Betty) Latour Freeman of Waltham Massachusetts, formerly of Lowell, passed away peacefully on Jan. 22, 2026 at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She was 86.

Elizabeth was born on Sep. 5, 1939 in Lowell to the late Edward C. and Nina (Bechard) Latour. She was raised and educated in Lowell where she was a member of the Girl’s Officers Club at Lowell High School. She received many academic awards including full tuition to her first year at Boston University, where she was a proud graduate with a Bachelor’s Degree in history and government.

Elizabeth met her future husband, Edward Freeman in 1963. She loved telling the story about how he first caught her eye when he crashed an invitation-only party that she was attending in Boston. They married on Sep. 3, 1966 in Lowell and first lived in Watertown, before eventually settling in Waltham, where they raised their family.

Known as Betty to her family and many friends, she was known for her kindness and love for her family. She loved dancing to Big-Band and 50’s music, watching Red Sox, Patriots and Celtics games, golf tournaments and old movies, especially musicals. Betty always looked forward to her weekly bridge games with the neighborhood girls and never missed Friday night Bingo at Our Lady’s in Waltham, earning her the affectionate nicknames ‘Baseball Betty’ and ‘Bingo Betty’.

Betty had a knack for numbers and finance and worked for the Shawmut Bank in Brighton and at Moody & Reagan Printers in Waltham for many years. She worked at the Bentley University Book Store, and helped manage the books for those with small businesses that needed assistance. Betty volunteered as a City Clerk at the voting polls during elections. She also generously donated her time at Our Lady’s Church in Waltham as a neighborhood CCD teacher and successfully ran the church’s 1000 Club for more than 25 years.

She loved going out for dinner, playing cards with friends and family, reading and neighborhood gatherings. Betty loved travelling to Foxwoods, Las Vegas, Atlantic City and Branson, as well as spending summer vacations on Cape Cod. She took great joy in hosting holidays and was an amazing cook and baker, famous for her lemon meringue and apple pies.

Elizabeth was the beloved wife of the late Edward Freeman, a registered Pharmacist, who passed away in 2021. They were married for more than 55 years. She was the loving and devoted mother of Deborah Elizabeth Aucoin and her husband Darrin of Waltham, MA and Lisa Joye O’Brien and her husband Michael of Weymouth, MA. She was sister-in-law of Raymond Malley and his wife Josette of Hanover, NH, and the late William Malley, Patricia DeRosa, Audrey Malley, Richard Freeman and Robert Freeman. She is also survived by many nieces, nephews, and dear friends.

Family and friends remembered Elizabeth’s life by gathering for an evening wake at The Joyce Funeral Home, 245 Main Street (Rte. 20), Waltham on Tuesday, Feb. 3. Wednesday, Feb. 4 before leaving in procession to Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted Church, 880 Trapelo Road, Waltham where her funeral mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m Burial will be in Mount Feake Cemetery, Waltham.

Federal data names Waltham Police Department as site of ICE arrests, police stress no department involvement with ICE detentions

BY ISABELLA LAPRIORE & ARTIE KRONENFELD • PUBLIC SAFETY • JANUARY 27, 2026

Internal U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement data obtained by a coalition of lawyers and academics lists eight immigration arrests from 2025 that appear to have taken place on city-owned property.

The Deportation Data Project compiles federal-level data about arrests, detainments and law enforcement detainers obtained from ICE using Freedom of Information Act requests. University of California, Los Angeles political science professor Graeme Blair; University of California, Berkeley law professor David Hausman; and immigration lawyer Amber Quereshi lead the project.



The DDP database records eight ICE arrests between January and October 2025 whose location is listed as the Waltham Police Department.

One entry, from May 7, matches case details for Mynor Lopez-Lopez listed in a June 6 press release from the U.S. District Attorney. Immigration authorities arrested Lopez-Lopez, 37, a Guatemalan national, on May 7 and charged him with unlawful reentry into the United States. According to court

records, Lopez-Lopez pleaded not guilty to assault and battery at a Newton District Court arraignment on Feb. 25. The case was closed for a lack of prosecution on May 8. He was deported to Guatemala on Aug. 25.

The other seven cases listed in the DDP database don't match any press releases from the DA. Two of the other people arrested had been charged with a crime previously — one for a traffic offense and one for a count of domestic violence — and two others had charges pending in court. The other three had no listed criminal charges on their cases.

A Waltham Police Department spokesperson said that the department had no information on any ICE arrests around or near the department at any of the dates and times obtained by the DDP database.

“The Waltham Police Department does not get notified of ICE arrests. WPD does not have records or documentation of ICE arrests. Any information regarding ICE arrests needs to be directed to that agency,” said the spokesperson.

The spokesperson also said Lopez-Lopez was not in WPD custody on May 7 and directed further questions to ICE. ICE did not respond to any of the multiple requests for comment from The Waltham Times.

WPD Chief Kevin O’Connell also did not respond to requests for comments. All questions were directed to the department’s public information line.

Continued on next page...

Lack of transparency fuels speculation

While DDP project leaders cite federal records as its source, much government information about ICE is nontransparent and difficult to access.

As a result, witness accounts, circumstantial evidence and speculative comments – often unverified – are being used by many to try to tease out what’s actually happening locally.

For example, photos and video taken earlier this month showing 24 new white SUVs in the parking lot next to the ICE facility in Burlington sparked concerns that ICE activity could ramp up in Massachusetts. However, ICE has not publicly commented on the SUVs nor its plans, and state and local officials had little to no information to share about the SUVs and ICE plans.

Meanwhile, an anonymous Jan. 15 post on Reddit alleged that ICE had used the area behind Waltham’s Public Works Department at 165 Lexington St. as a staging facility to process detainees in early 2025. The Reddit user provided no evidence, saying the posts were based on activity the user had observed. The user has since deleted the account used to post the information, but not before the information spread online.

Mayor Jeannette A. McCarthy said she had heard allegations that the DPW and adjacent police parking lot had been used by ICE and that Waltham police were “assisting with civil enforcement actions.” She said such assistance was not allowed by Massachusetts law and that O’Connell told her the allegations were false.

McCarthy added that the WPD has had ongoing outreach to ensure residents are comfortable approaching the police, regardless of immigration status. “For the most part, I would say that the Waltham police are trying to protect the rights of all,” she said.

The Public Works Department did not respond to requests for comment by the deadline.

Sean T. Durkee, city councilor for Ward 6, where both facilities are located, said he hadn’t heard the allegations that ICE used DPW property.

“Without dates, times, photographs, WPD spokesperson names, or mayoral confirmation, it is difficult knowing whether these allegations are true. Based on constituent reporting of CPW yard activities, it’s odd I wouldn’t have heard anything by now,” Durkee wrote in a statement to The Waltham Times.

Other councilors said they were made aware of the allegations last year by either constituents, social media posts or both.

Ward 8 Councilor Cathyann Harris said she learned of the allegations from a constituent in May 2025 and she asked the police to issue a press release to address the issue.

WPD issued a statement on May 20 stressing that the city’s Police Department does not participate in civil immigration enforcement and hadn’t received any requests from ICE to assist in its immigration operations.

Additionally, the release cited a 2017 Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decision that state and local officials cannot detain individuals solely based on federal immigration detainers or non-judicial warrants.

City Council President and Ward 9 Councilor Robert G. Logan said city leaders have seen no evidence of ICE using city property as a staging area to process detainees.

Second Avenue shut down after dump truck collides with utility wires

BY JOSEPH SHARKEY • PUBLIC SAFETY • JANUARY 27, 2026



Emergency crews responded to Second Avenue late Monday night, Jan. 26, after a city-owned dump truck whose cargo container was in the raised position became entangled with overhead utility wires. The impact pulled wires down across the roadway and damaged utility poles, prompting a response from police, fire and utility crews.

No serious injuries were reported but a section of the road was closed so Eversource workers could repair the damage and restore power to the area.

The city issued a travel advisory on Tuesday morning, Jan. 27, alerting drivers that portions of Second Avenue and Bear Hill Road will be closed in the vicinity of 341 Second Ave. to allow the repair work to be completed.

The city advised drivers to use Winter Street to access Second Avenue between Costco and MassGeneral West up to 305 Second Ave. It advised drivers to use Main Street to access higher address numbers on Second Avenue. Second Avenue has reopened since Monday's travel advisory.

Market Basket plaza owners still searching for tenants for new construction

BY ARTIE KRONENFELD • BUSINESS • JANUARY 27, 2026

Architect's rendering of the building under construction at 98 Tower Road. Courtesy of CBT.



A new building going up at 96 Tower Road behind the Jake n Joes Sports Grille does not yet have designated tenants, according to the plaza's owners.

Rick Vallarelli, the real estate development manager of J & Co. LLC — the company listed on the special building

permit for the site filed with the city and a company associated with 1265 Main St LLC, the plaza's owner — said that the company has not yet found a tenant for the building but has received some interest.

Initial building plans dated last June label the building as a single-story 9,000-square-foot space “intended for restaurant tenants.” The developer has not yet requested any special permits for nonstandard use of the land at City Council public hearings; the land is zoned for commercial use.

This building is a part of the commercial space at 1265 Main St., which contains the Market Basket plaza. 1265 Main St LLC has requested a zoning change to allow residential as well as commercial construction on the lot. Vallarelli told the City Council that the company intends to build residentially in the north of the lot in currently unused areas.

Mayor sets time limit for all events on Waltham Common

BY STEVE MILMORE • GOVERNMENT • JANUARY 27, 2026



Mayor Jeanette A. McCarthy has set a four-hour time limit for events using the Waltham Common going forward. Per the Jan. 15 notice from the Mayor's Office, the new rule is effective immediately. The four-hour limit excludes setup and cleanup time, which will be determined by the city for each application.

Some community leaders and organizers are surprised by the timing of the announcement and the effect it may have on future city events.

"I'm both concerned and bewildered by this new policy. Concerned, because it comes at a moment when First Amendment rights are being trampled by the federal government and seems to be designed to send a chilling message to anyone wanting to use the common to express those rights locally; and bewildered, because it essentially makes numerous community events – Steampunk Festival, Latino Festival, Pride and many others – impossible since they all run more than the new maximum number of hours and there does not seem to be a mechanism for extension," stated Jennifer Rose, founding member of Waltham Concerned Citizens and someone who has organized many events on the common, in an email to the Waltham Times.

Organizers of the 2026 Steampunk Festival issued a statement yesterday on social media saying they have been in touch with McCarthy and have been told there will be no exceptions to the new time limit. "We're trying to figure out how to reduce a seven-hour festival to four hours and will need some time to consider our options," lead organizer Melissa Honig said.

"I'm disappointed at the decision and many others I talked to are as well," said Nick Hammond, president of Waltham Pride, which organizes a festival each June. "I'm not sure why it had to happen."

McCarthy said residents on Main Street, Moody Street and "as far away as the Highlands" have complained about the noise and loud music from all-day events on the common. She added that the new hours restriction is not just for community events but "applies to city events as well." Regarding wear-and-tear on the common, McCarthy did not have numbers at hand but said cleanup expenses have increased over the years, as have the number of permits requested.

McCarthy denied that the time change is the city's way of clamping down on or making it inconvenient to hold events or rallies. "We've had a permit process in place for a long time so that we can best organize requests and be fair to all people who want to use the common," she said. "That is still in place. The only change made was to the length of time for events." A permit is not needed to use the sidewalks around the common, she said.

To receive permission to host an event on Waltham Common, applicants must send an email to the Mayor's Office with the requested date, time and event details. That email is forwarded to the Waltham Police, Public Works, Wires, and Health departments for review. All comments are then sent to the Mayor's Office and, if approved, a permit is issued in writing.

Other local communities assign the function and review of public space usage to parks or recreation departments. In Newton and Weston, for instance, an online application form is used for similar permit requests and only requires department approval versus a mayoral-level decision.

Marie Piraino, 1936–2026, loving wife and mother

BY NEWSROOM • OBITUARY • JANUARY 27, 2026

Marie A. (Donovan) Piraino died Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026, in Massachusetts General Hospital after an illness. She was 89.

Marie was born May 25, 1936 in Boston, a daughter of the late Justin and Gertrude (Corkery) Donovan. A graduate of Mission High School she then earned her nursing degree from Lemuel Shattuck Hospital School of Nursing.

Marie was quiet by nature and she loved reading. She married James J. Piraino in St. Columbkille Church in Brighton on Jul. 18, 1970. She worked as a licensed practical nurse at Lemuel Shattuck Hospital, St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Brighton and lastly at Marist Hill Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

In addition to her husband of 55 years, Jim, she leaves her children, Maria Walazek (David Jr.) of Billerica and Joseph Piraino of Los Angeles, California; and her grandchildren, Gabriella and Justin Walazek. She was a sister of the late Justina Skehill.

Family and friends will honored Marie's life by gathering for an afternoon wake in The Joyce Funeral Home, 245 Main Street (Rte. 20), Waltham on Sunday, Feb. 1. Monday morning before leaving in procession to St. Jude's Church, 147 Main Street, Waltham, was a funeral mass. Burial was in in Mount Feake Cemetery, Waltham.

City Council meets briefly to approve items on city's snow day

BY ARTIE KRONENFELD • GOVERNMENT • JANUARY 27, 2026



Members of the City Council, like many other Walthamites, were snowed in after this weekend's storm. Still, the council met virtually on Monday for less than half an hour to approve committee decisions from last week.

Councilors unanimously voted to accept a grant from Eversource for public streetlights; approve a secondhand-car sales license; authorize loans to move the Consolidated Public Works Department and to turn the former Woerd Avenue dump into a revitalized Koutoujian Park; accept toys from the U.S. Marine Corps' Toys for Tots program and historic Waltham memorabilia donated to the city; and file a number of older motions.

The City Council also accepted a list of new business items from Mayor Jeannette A. McCarthy. All of McCarthy's requests were forwarded to committee meetings for next week. One item — appointing former Councilor-at-Large Kathy McMenimen to the city's Zoning Board of Appeals as an associate member — met with some resistance by a couple of viewers in the comments section of the meeting's YouTube livestream.

“As a concerned resident, I would respectfully request McMenimen not be appointed to the zoning board,” wrote a viewer under the handle MetalFinger24, identified on their channel as Jack Holder. McMenimen, who held a seat on the City Council for 50 years, was voted out by residents in November.

Next week the Committee of the Whole will discuss her potential appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals, a board responsible for interpreting and enforcing the city's zoning code by determining certain types of special building permit and resolving construction cases that do not meet the city's zoning code.

Council President Robert G. Logan also specified that this year's Kevin M. Ritcey Service Award Committee will be chaired by Ward 3 Councilor Bill Hanley and this year's Cable Access Committee will be chaired by Ward 2 Councilor Caren Dunn.

Also at the request of the mayor, the City Council's committees will next week discuss:

- Appointing John J. O'Connor to assist the city's Veterans' Services and Licensing departments. (Committee of the Whole)
- Accepting two state grants totaling \$7.5 million as part of the Community One Stop for Growth program for the
- city's Green Street connector project. (Finance)
- Allocating \$106,872.50 in funding to resurface Pine Vale Road. (Finance)
- Allocating \$143,000 in additional funding for water and sewer work in the city. (Finance)
Approving a salary increase for an employee in the Auditor's Office. (Finance)
- Purchasing a new ice surfacing machine costing \$152,129.27 for the Veterans Memorial Skating Rink. (Finance)
- Authorizing a \$940,000 loan to design the interior of the Howe Building at the former Fernald State School. (Long-Term Debt and Capital Planning)

Domenico DiFiore, 1943–2026, ‘poured love into everything he did’

BY NEWSROOM • OBITUARY • JANUARY 27, 2026



Domenico DiFiore, of Waltham, died Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026 at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. He was 83.

Born in Brontë, Catania, Sicily, Domenico was the son of the late Antonino DiFiore and Maria (Landa) DiFiore. His education came from working alongside his father on the family farm, learning the values of hard work, resourcefulness and devotion to family, qualities that would define him throughout his life.

On Apr. 13, 1971, he married the love of his life, Matilde Faranda, in Brontë. Later that same year, the couple immigrated to the United States, settling in Waltham among a close-knit circle of relatives. Together they built a warm and lively home, what they fondly considered their own little village, where they raised their children surrounded by family, tradition and love.

Domenico was exceptionally hardworking and took great pride in providing for those he loved. After arriving in Waltham, He started out at the Waltham Watch Factory and Grover Cronin’s before landing a job he truly enjoyed at SkyChef, preparing meals for flights out of Logan Airport. He liked being in the kitchen, and the job benefits brought his family an extraordinary gift: the ability to return to Sicily almost every year. Those month-long summer trips created some of their happiest memories that the family will cherish forever.

Domenico had a great sense of humor; quick with a witty one-liner and endlessly loving. His family was always his first priority, constantly worrying about everyone else’s well-being before his own. He had a remarkable talent for fixing anything and his family considered him to be their own MacGyver, inventing tools or solutions whenever needed. He loved tending to his garden, especially his cherished fig tree, and he found joy in cooking and baking. His tomato sauce was famously sweet and delicious, and his tiramisu was a family favorite. Whether in the kitchen, the garden or the workshop, Domenico poured love into everything he did.

Domenico leaves his beloved wife of 54 years, Matilde (Faranda) DiFiore of Waltham; his children, Antonino DiFiore and his wife Kimberly Ann of Dracut, Carmelo DiFiore of Everett, and Maria DiFiore and her fiancé Michael Cataldo of Somerville; his grandchildren, James, Nicole, Justin, Anthony and Geena DiFiore, and Giovanni Cataldo; his great-grandchildren, Riley and Raegan DiFiore; his sister, Angelina Lore of Sicily; and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his parents and his brother, Pedro DiFiore.

Family and friends honored Domenico’s life by gathering for an evening wake on Thursday, Jan. 29 at Joyce Funeral Home, 245 Main Street, Waltham, and again at 9 a.m. on Friday morning before leaving in procession to Sacred Heart Church, 311 River Street, Waltham where his funeral mass was celebrated. Burial followed in Calvary Cemetery, Waltham.

Everlasting Life

BY DAVID GREENFIELD • TRIBUTE • JANUARY 26, 2026

Joseph Greenfield – at home in Oceanside NY 1964.



To commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, 2026, and in observance of my father's twentieth yahrzeit (anniversary of his passing), I offer these words and images – Everlasting Life.

My father is a Holocaust survivor. He was liberated from KZ (concentration camp) Mauthausen by US 11th Armor troops – Thunderbolt Division – on May 5, 1945. Despite the unimaginably black abyss from which he emerged, he chose a path of light to create a new family and new life in a new country.

He was my hero. I think about him every day.

“May his precious soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life.”

Those words are etched at the base of the monument recently dedicated in my father Joseph's memory. I've been thinking a lot about everlasting life since he died. I've now come to a better understanding of its meaning. In the beginning, I fully expected to feel lost and aching. Expressing similar pained emotions, two Jewish sages, Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel, composed these lyrics for their soulful song “America”:

I'm lost and aching and I don't know why, Counting the cars on the New Jersey Turnpike

When my journey of mourning began, it was also in New Jersey, and it was also on a highway. But it wasn't the Turnpike, and I wasn't counting cars. I was, however, numbly staring out the window of a small SUV as it cruised down Jersey's Garden State Parkway on the way back from the cemetery where my father had just been laid to rest.

Although traffic was flowing freely, our driver suddenly exited onto a side road. I turned to ask why the switch. He told me he grew up in New Jersey and loved driving the rural routes whenever he could. At that moment, I pictured my dad leaning over to give him the directions to turn off, just as he often did to me when I was driving, and just as he would have done if he was behind the wheel and the option of a more scenic route presented. I realized in that instant that I would never again take the quiet “road less traveled” without feeling my dad's presence. So, despite the tears of the morning and the turbulence of the previous few months, and unlike the lost and aching souls in the song “America”, I smiled and turned to continue gazing out the window. Somehow I was happy and at peace.

My father on the road less traveled.

One day when sitting in synagogue for the daily morning service, I sensed my father's presence once again, as I have on numerous other occasions. My eyes had momentarily drifted from the siddur (prayer book) and fixed on the beautiful aron kodesh (ark containing the Torah scrolls) in front of me. A smile spontaneously spread across my face. What happened to elicit such a pleasurable diversion? Among his many talents, my dad was a master craftsman. One of his last creations, at age 87, was building a commissioned aron kodesh for his own congregation. In the exuberance to complete the project, he made an errant cut with a power saw and it needed to be

disguised with just a slight, undetectable modification of design. This scenario of an “excitement faux-pas and correction” did occur occasionally in his creations. When he told me what happened, I invoked the traditional carpenter’s mantra,



“Remember, you measure twice and cut once, not the other way around.” This interchange had long ago become a standing joke between us. For added emphasis, I added that in my surgical work, I typically measure three or four times before an incision is made, never the other way around. With all of our kidding aside, I always learned a lot standing alongside my dad watching him work. As a teen I often begrudged having to spend my time being his

assistant, steadying the wood as he sawed those knotty-pine boards for renovations around our home and other such jobs. But that is how I developed an appreciation for the beauty of wood and finer points of woodwork.

Working in his NJ garage workshop, 2005

And later it was for photography, of which he was also a master. So now, whenever I take in the aroma of fresh sawdust, or whenever I hear the soft metallic whisper click of my camera’s shutter, I know he is there. His presence will always be with me. It is everlasting.

Self portrait with Leica III and 90 mm lens.



My father lived to an old age, but he never became an old man. He was vibrant, independent, fiercely loving of family, incredibly creative & artistic, and wise with the fundamental precepts of Judaism to the end. I will always be grateful for and inspired by that full life.

As I said, he was my hero.

Joseph and David – building a deck in Newton, 1980.

“May his precious soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life.”





Advocates see promise in initial zoning reform proposal

BY ARTIE KRONENFELD • GOVERNMENT • JANUARY 25, 2026

WIN zoning code review “report card.” Courtesy Waltham Inclusive Neighborhoods.

The graphic is a grid-based report card titled "ZONING REVIEW REPORT CARD". It lists five categories of zoning changes with letter grades. The categories are: Single Family Starter Homes, Modest Multifamily, Perfect Fit Parking, and Green Space in Every Neighborhood. The first category has grades C and B. The second has grades A, A, and A. The third has grades C and B. The fourth has grade B. A small icon of a house is next to the first category, a house with a garden for the second, a parking 'P' sign for the third, and a tree for the fourth. The Waltham Inclusive Neighborhoods logo is in the bottom right corner of the grid.

ZONING REVIEW REPORT CARD	
 SINGLE FAMILY STARTER HOMES	
C	15k s.f. minimum lot size in R1 Zone
B	5k s.f. minimum lots in R2 zone
 MODEST MULTIFAMILY	
A	No Density Maximum
A	Duplexes by-right in 12k lots (up from 3k)
A	Multifamily by-right in center
 PERFECT FIT PARKING	
C	Single Family (2 space min)
B	Multifamily
 GREEN SPACE IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD	
B	Green space requirement

Housing group Waltham Inclusive Neighborhoods, which has been vocal in its advocacy throughout Waltham’s ongoing zoning code reform, has published its evaluation of the first proposed steps of the rezoning process. City-hired contractor CommunityScale LLC in September submitted the first parts of its proposal to revise Waltham’s zoning code. The proposal so far consists of a map of different zoning districts, a table outlining what buildings lot owners can build in those zones and a list of definitions.

In a December “report card” WIN wrote that these changes made real progress in its affordable housing goals. Zach Shapiro, who is a member of WIN’s media team, said the organization made the report card because the current proposal is dense

and hard to navigate but contains information important to many residents.

“The MBTA Communities Act you can describe in a sentence. An ADU you can describe in one to two sentences, [but] this zoning change is so complicated,” he said. “What we’ve learned is that a lot of people actually do want more housing, they just don’t realize it.”

WIN gives mixed grades

WIN advocates for five main priorities in zoning changes: allowing for more small single- and multifamily homes, lowering parking requirements, creating more green spaces and supplying more citywide support for affordable development.

The report card applauds the fact that CommunityScale’s initial proposal doesn’t set any caps on the number of units per acre in any district; WIN argues that eliminating these maximums allows neighborhoods to be more flexible. The code also allows duplexes and multifamily housing by right in more lots, which WIN said will help “in neighborhoods where [multifamily housing is] already common, but may not be permitted by right.”

By comparison, however, the organization does not rate the reforms for single-family lots quite as highly. WIN advocates for smaller lot sizes to allow for more affordable single-family homes, and stated that CommunityScale’s proposed reforms don’t hit its marks, although the rezoning proposal does shrink some single-family lot minimums.

“If you listen to a lot of the city councilors, most of them actually do reference wanting to build more affordable single-family homes, and it’s interesting that [in] this proposal that’s one of the areas that’s weaker,” Shapiro said. One necessary step toward that goal, he said, is reducing parking requirements. The current zoning code requires two parking spaces for every single-family home, which Shapiro said doesn’t actually reflect the proportion of Waltham households that have two cars.

CommunityScale's proposed reforms don't reduce the single-family house parking minimums but do lower parking minimums to 1.2 spaces per unit in small developments and 0.5 spaces per unit in large ones. WIN said this policy change is an improvement but could be more useful if simplified.

In terms of green space, the WIN report card highlights two new measures the proposal introduces: maximums on the amount of a lot developers can pave and additional green space minimums. These newly-proposed measures are less stringent in the city's single-family neighborhoods, and Shapiro said that WIN would prefer higher green space minimums and the elimination of caps on the buildable proportion of lots.

These zoning proposals don't directly address WIN's aim of increasing affordable housing, Shapiro said. The organization wants Waltham to revisit its affordable housing policies, which is something the City Council is tackling separately.

Shapiro said that these changes would go a long way toward creating more housing, which he argues would improve affordability for everyone.

The road so far

Shapiro said it's important for the City Council to move CommunityScale's proposed reforms forward.

"What we're trying to do is to get this out to the public so this doesn't become another thing that holds promise for real change in the city but doesn't ever get implemented," he said. "This is something that, frankly, a large number of people really do care about."

The City Council's last attempt at large-scale zoning reform was in 2015, but almost no policy changes came of it.

In the fall of 2024 the city commissioned CommunityScale to revamp the city's zoning code. This code dictates what property owners can build by right in districts throughout Waltham, including building uses, sizes and density. The city held an initial public input hearing in June for residents to submit feedback on the current zoning code.

When the City Council's Ordinances and Rules Committee accepted this first offering from CommunityScale, emails in the submission package indicated the company planned to complete a draft of the full code in August.

The committee said it would not take action on the recommendations until it received a complete audit of immediate changes to improve the zoning code, which it said was supposed to be CommunityScale's first deliverable. The City Council has not publicly received any more proposed reforms from CommunityScale since its initial September offering.

Health Department temporarily denies bodywork licenses over certification issues

BY ARTIE KRONENFELD • GOVERNMENT • JANUARY 25, 2026

Interior of Oriental Foot Reflexology. Courtesy Oriental Foot Reflexology.



The Board of Health last week decided not to grant two new licenses to bodywork therapists seeking to practice in Waltham.

The city defines bodywork as tissue manipulation that does not legally constitute massage. Bodywork shops are excluded from Massachusetts massage regulation and often legislated on a municipal level.

At its Jan. 21 meeting, the board discussed the qualifications of Bo Wu, who was applying to become a Tui Na bodywork therapist at Oriental Foot Reflexology. Bonnie Peng, Oriental Foot Reflexology's owner, told the board that she has known Wu for a long time and that he'd worked for a bodywork business in Watertown for more than 10 years.

Wu presented a certificate from the National Organization for Bodyworks Therapy, which is not one of the certifying organizations that the board recognizes. Because Wu's paperwork was otherwise in order, board members requested he reach out to an approved organization to ensure he meets their certification standards. The board voted to require Wu to present his certification at a future Board of Health meeting before it would approve his license.

A friend of Peng's, who identified himself to The Waltham Times as Josh, told the board that this waiting period would be a hindrance to the business because many bodywork businesses have been finding it "almost impossible" to find and hire professionals who have studied in China.

Regardless of immigration status, many qualified workers have been "scared to death to go to work because they're afraid they're all going to be rounded up and deported," he said.

The board made the same decision regarding the other applicant, Renying Yi, who was certified by the same organization.

Board Chair Dr. Henry Merola presented the petitioners with a list of bodywork certification organizations approved by the city. Information at the top of the printed list seems to indicate that it was generated from a Google search, however, and only one of the businesses on the list appears to be listed in the health department's bodywork regulations.

In response to questions about the disparity between what's listed in the regulations and the list provided to the petitioners, a Health Department representative wrote that "the Board might consider other membership organizations/national certification commissions if they meet the previously mentioned criteria [in the bodywork regulations]."

Continued on next page...

Because the board requires bodywork shops to have an employee present at all times who can communicate effectively in English, Peng also assured the board that although Wu was not fluent in English, she or another English-speaking employee will always be on site.

Director of Health Michelle Feeley said that no English-speaking employees were at the shop when it was recently inspected. Peng replied that she had left temporarily that day to visit a family member in the hospital but was available by phone.

Board members repeatedly asked Peng, Wu and Josh whether employees who could speak English were available onsite, even after Peng's initial response. And Merola expressed incredulity that Wu was unable to speak fluently in

English after 10 years working in Watertown. "For how many years? And he still doesn't speak English?" Merola said.

Bodywork regulation update

The board also revisited deliberations about revising its current bodywork regulations.

Last month it considered comparable regulations from Framingham and Watertown. At that meeting Waltham Board of Health members spoke well of Watertown's regulations, which they said were very similar to Waltham's but which Feeley noted had been recently "tightened up" by Watertown officials.

The board voted to authorize Feeley to ask Watertown for permission to copy parts of its regulations language into Waltham's own regulations.

The board will hold a public meeting before making any changes to its current regulations.

Public Safety Report: Woman going door to door asking for money causes string of calls

BY CYD ABNET • PUBLIC SAFETY • JANUARY 25, 2026

The Ellison Park neighborhood. Google Street Image.



Police responded to several calls this week involving a woman going door to door asking for money.

On Jan. 16 at 1:48 p.m., police responded to a call on Ellison Park involving a woman with short hair knocking on people's doors asking for money. Officers located and spoke to the woman, telling her to stop the activity.

Police responded to two similar calls in the same area on Jan. 19 at 7:56 a.m. and Jan. 20 at 11:47 a.m. On Jan. 20 at 4:14 p.m., police responded to Middlesex Road, where a party reported being approached by a woman in a car who was asking for money. Police believe it was the female from the previous incidents. All officers are aware of the situation and will continue to respond to incidents as they are reported.

A summary of police activity from Jan. 15 to Jan. 20 is as follows:

- On Jan. 15 at 4:36 p.m., police responded to Reyem Street, where a woman reported finding several high capacity gun magazines with ammunition in her daughter's laundry. Police determined they belonged to the daughter's boyfriend and are seeking charges.
- On Jan. 16 at 5:16 p.m., police responded to Margarita's on Moody Street to reports of vandalism. The party reported leaving Margarita's and discovering that his car was covered in dried eggs and had several deep scratches. There are no witnesses or suspects.
- On Jan. 16 at 6:58 p.m., police responded to reports of a partially nude male at the intersection of High Street and Hall Street. The reporting party stated that there was a male who was walking down the street with his pants down and his genitals exposed. Police checked the area and were unable to locate the male.
- On Jan. 20 at 2:16 p.m., police responded to Middlesex Road to reports of vandalism. The reporting party said that someone had splashed "a substance" on her door and left a note that said "Kick our front door open again, watch what happens." There are no witnesses or suspects.

All information was obtained from spokespeople with the Waltham Police Department, the publicly available police blotter and police reports available at Waltham District Court.

Proposed Beaver Street milling project receives go-ahead from Conservation Commission

BY CYD ABNET • GOVERNMENT • JANUARY 25, 2026

Beaver Street section from Clematis Avenue to the MBTA crossing.



The Conservation Commission determined that a proposed Beaver Street milling project is classified as a ‘limited project’, meaning it is not under the protection of the Wetlands Protection Act. The project must be approved by several other city boards and committees before it can begin.

The project is part of a revamp of the MBTA crossing at the location, according to transportation engineer Kimberly Miller from Nitsch Engineering. Some of the

construction would take place within a 25-foot buffer zone to the Beaver Brook wetlands area, so the Conservation Commission is required to determine whether the work can take place.

The project seeks to mill and overlay the portion of Beaver Street between Waverly Oaks Road and Clematis Avenue. The sidewalk along the south side of the street will be reconstructed, and a ten-foot shared use path will be added on the north side of the street to maintain the connection of Waverly Oaks Road to the nearby rail trail. Compost filter tubes will be placed along adjacent Beaver Brook so that runoff from the project doesn’t enter the waterway.

Waltham resident John Allen raised concerns about the project’s plan to narrow a portion of the roadway by five feet, saying that it would endanger cyclists. Allen was instructed to direct all questions and comments about the project to city traffic engineer Michael Garvin as those details are not under the purview of the Conservation Commission.

Commission vice chair Bill Doyle said because the proposal is under a limited project classification in the Wetlands Protection Act, it does not require a formal notice of intent.

In other business, the commission:

- Signed off on the construction of a drywall shelter at the Home Depot on First Avenue. The shelter will be used to store drywall so that it doesn’t get damaged by the elements while waiting for the customer to pick it up. While this isn’t under the jurisdiction of the commission, all committees and boards need to sign off on development prospectuses.
- Approved plans by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to construct a stone wall alongside a portion of eroded asphalt walkway close to Beaver Brook. The wall will support the walkway and prevent further erosion.

Online pay options help Health Department complete license renewals

BY ARTIE KRONENFELD • GOVERNMENT • JANUARY 25, 2026

The Board of Health met on Jan. 21, 2026, to review license renewals by local businesses.



Answering questions from the board are Bo Wu, bodywork therapist, and Bonnie Peng, owner of Oriental Foot Reflexology. Photo by Artie Kronenfeld.

Health Director Michelle Feeley reported to the Board of Health this week that all but 14 of the city's restaurants, retail stores and tobacco stores have renewed their licenses for 2026.

"We're happy that it's 14. We've had 50," she told the board.

Feeley said that her department is still waiting on renewals from nine tobacco, three retail and two food institutions. Every year the Health Department requires that any such institution renew its license by Jan. 1, which involves filling out a form and paying a licensing fee.

Many renewals were already completed by October, Feeley said. She added that renewals were made easier this year because the department now offers online options for paperwork and payments, which has made it more convenient for businesses to turn in paperwork.

Feeley said her department had already reached out multiple times to notify the 14 remaining stores that they needed to submit their licensing paperwork and fees. The Board of Health authorized her to give those stores a final deadline for license renewal and then close the businesses until they had renewed their licenses by that date. The board also voted to change requirements for 2027 to incentivize early renewal, automatically authorizing the department to close businesses that had not renewed their licenses by ten days after the Jan. 1 renewal deadline.

Kings of Swing play to full house at Stanley Senior Center

Steve Milmore • Community • January 26, 2026



Bob Defelice (left) and Steve Heck from the Kings of Swing band. Photo by Steve Milmore.

One of Boston’s best swing, Latin and Top 40 bands entertained more than 100 seniors at a sold-out concert at the Stanley Senior Center on Friday.

Bob Defelice and Steve Heck from the [Kings of Swing](#) performed live before a packed and toe-tapping audience, covering such classics as “In the Mood,” “Oh Dolly,” “Take the A Train” and “New York New York.”

The band has performed all over New England and played with other top acts over the years, including Buddy Rich, Count Basie and Duke Ellington.

The Council on Aging offers several social gatherings for seniors over 60 and their families. See the [January calendar](#) for end-of-month events.



Kings of Swing entertain big crowd at the Stanley Senior Center. Photo by Steve Milmore.

Subzero temperatures did not deter latest protests

Waltham News Team

January 25, 2026

Photos by Diana Korzenik









Around 60 local residents, many of them seniors, stood out on Main Street on Sunday morning. Undeterred by 8-degree temperatures and snow flurries, they held aloft signs decrying the fatal shootings by agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement of two Minneapolis citizens, [Renée Good](#) on Jan. 7 and [Alex Pretti](#) on Jan. 24.



Residents braved 8-degree temperatures to protest the Minneapolis killings by ICE agents.

Waltham home sales, Jan. 20–23, 2026

	Sale Date	Address	Sale Price	BR/Baths	Size
	1/20/2026	394 CRESCENT ST	\$547,500	5/2.5	3476 sf
	1/22/2026	73 ORANGE ST UNIT 73-2	\$840,000	3/1	3061 sf
	1/22/2026	61 HALL ST UNIT 102	\$1,038,000	2/2	1350 sf
	1/23/2026	93 LAKEVIEW TER	\$480,000	1/1	699 sf
	1/23/2026	18-20 FISKE ST	\$1,235,000	2/2.5	3578 sf
	1/23/2026	28 COLLEGE FARM RD UNIT 2	\$669,000	3/1.5	1086 sf

Calendar

February 3-22

TUE
3

February 3 @ 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Puppet Playtime at Gore Place

Gore Place 52 Gore Street

Come join Good News Gus and his puppet pals for songs, stories, and puppet shenanigans at our Carriage House. This interactive puppet show is both fun and funny; you'll be in stitches by the end! The sessions are recommended for 3- and 4-year-olds, but all are welcome.

\$16

TUE
3

February 3 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm [Zoning Board of Appeals meeting](#)

Zoning Board of Appeals meeting

City of Waltham Government Center 119 School Street, Waltham, MA

The Zoning Board of Appeals generally meets on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. in the Public Meeting Room located on the ground level, or in the auditorium on the first floor, of the Arthur Clark Government Center at 119 School Street. The meeting schedule is determined by the volume of applications filed with the ZBA. [...]

TUE
3

February 3 @ 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm [Open rehearsals with Lexington Pops Chorus](#)

Open rehearsals with Lexington Pops Chorus

Clark Hall @ Hancock Church 1912 Massachusetts Ave, Lexington

Sing with Lexington Pops Chorus in its 44th season. Lexington Pops Chorus will hold two open rehearsals, January 27 and February 3, in Clark Hall at Hancock Church, 1912 Mass Ave, Lexington (on the Green). We welcome new singers each September and January. Auditions are not required, but singers must be able to read music. [...]

Free

WED
4

February 4 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Jake Blount in concert

Waltham Public Library 735 Main St, Waltham, MA, United States

Join us for a special concert with Jake Blount, award-winning performer and scholar of Black folk music. A talented multi-instrumentalist—from the banjo to fiddle to electric guitar to synthesizer—Blount creates his own "Afrofuturist folklore." Blount has shared his music at venues including Carnegie Hall, Newport Folk Festival, the Library of Congress and NPR's Tiny Desk. [...]

Free

WED
4

February 4 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Mill Talk: Forging History —The creation of Saugus Iron Works NHS

Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation 154 Moody Street, Waltham, United States

The Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site, located in Saugus, Massachusetts, is a mid-twentieth century reconstruction of a seventeenth-century ironworks. Built by private investors in the public interest, the site is at turns an outdoor museum teaching the public about the origins of the iron and steel industries and an object lesson in the ingenuity [...]

Free

WED
4

February 4 @ 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm [School Committee meeting](#)

School Committee meeting

617 Lexington St 617 Lexington St, Waltham, MA

The School Committee typically meets twice per month (once each in July and August) on Wednesday evenings. Check the School Committee web site to confirm meeting dates and times. Unless specifically noted, all regular meetings of the Waltham School Committee begin at 7 p.m. and are held in the Cannon Lecture Hall at 617 Lexington [...]

THU
5

February 5 @ 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Plant Parenthood 101 with Emerald City Plant Shop

Waltham Public Library 735 Main St, Waltham, MA, United States

Calling all plant lovers! Learn the basics of how to best take care of your plants with Quontay "Q" Turner, founder of Emerald City Plant Shop. New England's first Black-owned plant shop and community incubator space, Emerald City believes in cultivating not just greenery, but also a thriving community that celebrates the beauty of nature [...]

Free

THU
5

February 5 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm [Waltham Cultural Council meeting](#)

Waltham Cultural Council meeting

Zoom

The Waltham Cultural Council is a part of the Massachusetts Cultural Council's local council program. It allocates funds for arts, sciences and humanities projects and events which focus on Waltham's cultural diversity and local history. The council meets approximately once per month. It accepts grant applications from September 1 to October 15 for the 18-month period [...]

THU
5

February 5 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm [Minutemen Toastmasters of Waltham](#)

Minutemen Toastmasters of Waltham

Zoom

Gain confidence as a public speaker. Our club, within Toastmasters International, works on improving communication and leadership skills in a supportive environment. We meet twice a month, first and third Thursday nights. The first meeting of the month is via Zoom, while the third Thursday meeting is hybrid with the in-person location at Meadow Green. [...]

THU
5

February 5 @ 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm [Conservation Commission meeting](#)

Conservation Commission meeting

Zoom

The Conservation Commission typically meets twice each month on Thursdays at 7 p.m. Meetings are usually held remotely via Zoom and are open to the public. Visit the commission's web page for more information (Zoom links are included in each posted agenda).

THU
5

February 5 @ 8:00 pm - 9:30 pm

Hovey Players present Sarah Ruhl's "Eurydice"

Hovey Players 9 Spring Street, Waltham, MA

On the day of her wedding, Eurydice falls victim to a tragic accident that sends her hurtling into the Underworld. Ripped from her beloved Orpheus, the greatest musician in the world, Eurydice is reunited with her father in the Land of the Dead. Orpheus journeys to retrieve his bride but Eurydice has doubts about returning [...]

\$25.00

FRI
6

February 6 @ 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm [Acme Theater presents "Church & State"](#)

Acme Theater presents "Church & State"

Acme Theater of Weston 377 North Avenue, Weston, MA

Acme Theater presents "Church & State" by Jason Odell Williams. Directed by Dave Sheppard. "Church & State" is a sharp, funny, and heartfelt play that asks big questions about faith, politics, and honesty through the lens of one very bad campaign weekend. Just days before his re-election, a North Carolina senator makes an offhand remark [...]

SAT

7

February 7 @ 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Brunch Latino en Taquería Clásica: Conoce gente nueva

Taqueria Mexico 24 Charles St, Waltham

Imagínate: tacos recién hechos, café caliente, y conversación que fluye naturalmente con gente que te entiende. Esta taquería familiar ha sido un tesoro escondido desde los '90s, y ahora es [...]

SAT

7

February 7 @ 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Charles River Collaboratory public workshops: Laser Engraving

Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation 154 Moody Street, Waltham, United States

Ever wonder how they get images and text on keychains, jewelry, and other objects? This workshop introduces participants to using the laser cutters and laser engravers at the Charles River [...]

Free

MON

9

February 9 @ 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm #

Historical Commission meeting

Zoom

The Waltham Historical Commission meets monthly, year-round. Meetings are typically held on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. To appear before the WHC or to submit correspondence or information, contact the commission 10 business days prior to the meeting. Meetings are usually held remotely via Zoom and are open to the public. [...]

MON

9

February 9 @ 7:30 pm - 10:00 pm

Waltham City Council meeting

Waltham City Hall 610 Main St., Waltham, MA, United States

Waltham City Council normally meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month, except during July and August. If a meeting falls on a Monday holiday, Council instead meets on Tuesday. Refer here for the full 2026 meeting schedule and full council and committee meeting times.

TUE

10

February 10 @ 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

National Grid — Customer assistance event

McDevitt Middle School 75 Church Street, Waltham, MA

Meet with assistance program experts and connect with the resources your family needs, all under one roof, all in one day. Our advocates will be on-site to help you explore options [...]

Free

TUE

10

February 10 @ 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Community Preservation Committee meeting

Zoom

The Waltham Community Preservation Committee meets approximately four times per year (September, November, February, May). Meetings are typically held on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. The application deadline is noon, one week before each meeting. The May meeting usually includes the annual public input hearing. Meetings are usually held remotely via [...]

WED

11

February 11 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Winter Exhibitions Opening Celebration

Rose Art Museum 415 South Street, Waltham, MA, United States

Join us for a lively winter exhibition opening that brings art, conversation, and community together. Be among the first to experience two exciting new exhibitions: "Photorealism in Focus," a fresh look at a movement that transformed how we see the everyday, and "Yinka Shonibare: Sanctuary," a powerful installation exploring belonging, history, and refuge through the [...]

MON

16

February 16 @ 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Tu Beshvat tree fair and Seder: Rescheduled

Temple Beth Israel invites the Waltham community to celebrate Tu Beshvat, the Jewish birthday of trees, which has been rescheduled to Monday, Feb. 16, at 2:00 p.m. There will be a short "tasting" service reflecting on the blessings of the seasons and the produce of the trees. Local environmental leaders will then present the work [...]

WED

18

February 18 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Low back pain and posture

Waltham YMCA 725 Lexington St, Waltham, MA

In this workshop a physical therapist will educate on the components of good posture for a healthy lower back. They will discuss the causes and types of low back pain as well as topics for improving back pain and prevention of low back pain. This health workshop is a continuation of the Community Outreach Program [...]

Free

WED

18

February 18 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Living well with Parkinson's disease

Newton YMCA 276 Church St, Newton, MA

One of the keys to living well with Parkinson's disease is to exercise and to avoid falls. This talk will focus on evidence-based updates and expert recommendations regarding exercise, balance [...]

Free

WED

18

February 18 @ 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Board of Health meeting

City of Waltham Government Center 119 School Street, Waltham, MA

The Board of Health meets monthly, year-round. Meetings are typically held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5 p.m. Contact the Health Department to confirm each meeting and [...]

THU

19

February 19 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Traffic Commission meeting

Waltham City Hall 610 Main St., Waltham, MA, United States

The Waltham Traffic Commission meets monthly, September to June. Meetings are typically held on the third Thursday of each month, at 10 a.m., with changes to accommodate special meetings and holidays. Meetings are held at City Hall, 610 Main Street, on the second floor, in the council chamber. Members of the public are invited to [...]

THU

19

February 19 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Minutemen Toastmasters of Waltham

Meadow Green Rehabilitation & Nursing Center 45 Woburn St. off Trapelo Rd., Waltham

Gain confidence as a public speaker. Our club, within Toastmasters International, works on improving communication and leadership skills in a supportive environment. We meet twice a month, first and third [...]

SUN

22

February 22 @ 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Music, tea and biscuits with the Ruth and Ben String Band

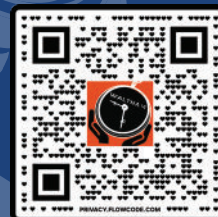
Gore Place 52 Gore Street

Enjoy a Sunday afternoon of "high-energy, old-time music" with the Ruth and Ben String Band. Come early to enjoy some tea, biscuits and good company in the beautifully restored (and [...])

\$21



**It takes many hands to
deliver trusted local news.
Won't you add yours?**



GIVE TODAY



SUBSCRIBE

**Get the latest Waltham news,
FREE in your inbox**

Thank you to our printing sponsor:



713 Main Street, Waltham, MA 02451 | (781) 899-3180