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Wu strikes tax deal with business leaders

Under compromise, rise in residential, commercial rates won't be extreme

By Catherine Carlock and Niki Griswold
GLOBE STAFF

Both residential and commercial property owners in Boston will see modest hikes in tax rates under a compromise announced Wednesday between Mayor Michelle Wu and major business groups that staves off the more extreme increases that were previously on the table.

The agreement resolves a dispute that has simmered for months between City Hall and Boston's business community over how to fund the city's \$4.6 billion budget when tax collections from office buildings are slumping in part because of the rise of remote work.

Wu had pushed for much higher rates for commercial properties to keep homeowners' bills in check. But her original

proposal to the Legislature languished in the face of stiff opposition from business leaders worried about the struggling office market.

Under the compromise, residential tax rates would increase by around 9 percent — in line with previous increases. The new commercial tax rate was not yet available but would be capped at 181.5 percent of the residential rate, up from

the current 175 percent ceiling, and step down incrementally over the following two years before returning to current levels.

After increasingly contentious exchanges over the past few weeks, all involved said Wednesday that they welcomed the compromise.

"For Boston to be a home for everyone, our residents and businesses depend on each other to thrive," Wu said in a

TAXES, Page A5

From an open letter by Anwar Kazmi, Saoud Elhafi, and Liz Ismail, former trustees of the Islamic Society of Boston:

"The result has been the departure of vital organizations, declining community engagement, and reduced fundraising. Board meetings have become hostile, and transparency has deteriorated."

RED ALERT



JOHN TLUMACKI/GLOBE STAFF

The time is right, the fruit is ripe, and the cranberry harvest is on, mostly in Southeastern Massachusetts, which has ideal growing conditions. In Wareham, workers did their thing recently at Tihonet Big Bog, owned by A.D. Makepeace Co., North America's largest cranberry grower. The harvesting will continue until the second week of November. **B5.**

Driving force on restaurant-worker question hailed, criticized

By Diti Kohli
GLOBE STAFF

While working at a Boston fine dining restaurant over a decade ago, Alexandre Galimberti saw "shady situations" everywhere. Tips ended up in the wrong hands; wage theft ran rampant. Some workers were rarely paid properly for over-

time, he said, but felt like they had little power to speak up about it.

Frustrated, Galimberti found his way to Restaurant Opportunities Center United, a New York-based workers' rights group, and launched a local chapter. They canvassed for raises and sick time, hoping to forge

a future where restaurants are more equitable places to work.

"I struggled to see myself aging in an industry that did not make it easy for me to start a family or become a homeowner," Galimberti said recently. "It made me realize that this system was broken and conducive for exploitation."

Thirteen years later, Galimberti has a lot of friends in his fight.

Restaurant Opportunities Center United has morphed into One Fair Wage, the powerhouse national organization pushing Question 5 on the November ballot, a measure that would eliminate the \$6.75 minimum

wage for tipped workers in Massachusetts and give servers, bartenders, and the like \$15 an hour, guaranteed. It would also permit restaurants to share workers' tips with cooks, cleaners, and other back-of-house staff whom customers never meet.

MINIMUM WAGE, Page A5

Political donors look outside Mass. to get most bang for their bucks

By Samantha J. Gross
GLOBE STAFF

When Donald Trump won the presidency in 2016, Pittsfield attorney Sherwood Guernsey, a diehard Democrat, felt called to make a change.

Sending money to Democrats in deep-blue Massachusetts and turning out to vote no longer felt like enough, said Guernsey, a former Democratic state representative and member of the party's state committee. Democrats like himself needed to think outside state lines.

On a snowy afternoon in January 2017, Guernsey launched the Rural Freedom Network, a political committee that was born out of a goal to support Democrats running at the federal level.

"The key for me was to focus on the tight races outside of Massachusetts," he said. "That was a strategic decision."

Guernsey's calculation is one shared by other deep-pocketed donors in wealthy Massachusetts, which this year, as in most past cycles, has few competitive races of its own. A Globe analysis of the top 500 contributions from Massachusetts residents in 2024 showed a steady stream of money toward mostly Democratic and nonpartisan super PACs across the country, but also a number of such Republican political groups benefiting from the largesse of Massachusetts donors.

DONORS, Page A7



GLOBE FILE/1972



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

The original Out of Town News opened next door to the Harvard Square kiosk in 1954 as a separate newsstand (top), then moved into the structure in 1984 before closing in 2019. The building has languished since then.

Read the news: Harvard Sq. kiosk gets new life at last

With \$3.3m renovation nearly complete, city sees different uses for former newsstand

By Spencer Buell
GLOBE STAFF

CAMBRIDGE — It may not look like much, this 500-square-foot kiosk in the heart of Harvard Square.

Visible through chain-link fencing, which has hemmed it in for years now, the small structure has the shape and feel of an oversized bus shelter, albeit one with handsomely restored brickwork and an ornate copper roof.

It had been the longtime home of Out of Town News, which closed in 2019, but then languished in construction purgatory, as the city worked to renovate it. That journey is set — allegedly, at least — to wrap up early next year and cost \$3.3 million, which would put it in the ballpark of an eye-popping \$6,600 per square foot.

There has been jubilation at this news among those who live and work in the square. But also, exasperation at what has transpired as the city has tried to reopen this beleaguered little landmark.

"This project has been dragging on for way too long. It is painfully slow, frustrating, and expensive," said Denise Jillson, head of the neighborhood's business association. "With all this money that we have and the resources, and the brain trust that we have, these things should be — it

KIOSK, Page A10

Mosque torn by internal strife

Three who quit board question leadership

By Danny McDonald
GLOBE STAFF

The Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, New England's largest mosque, is being rocked by internal turmoil, with three members of the board of trustees resigning, citing diminished community engagement, declining fundraising, and the departure of Islamic organizations that had partnered with the mosque.

"The troubling leadership from the remaining board members has led us to this decision," read an open letter from Anwar Kazmi, Saoud Elhafi, and Liz Ismail, former trustees of the Islamic Society of Boston, which was posted online and distributed in person to some of the mosque's congregants last month. "We believe their chosen direction for the ISB has strayed from Islamic principles and has caused significant harm to our community."

In the letter, the trio lamented that ISB has declined since 2017 "due to consolidated power in the hands of a few."

MOSQUE, Page A10

Wheelchair users applauded new state regulations that address painfully long wait times for wheelchair repairs but worry the initiatives don't go far enough. **B1.**

North Korea has sent troops to Russia to join the fight against Ukraine, a shift in Moscow's effort to win the war, US officials said. **A3.**

Dozens of commuter rail workers rallied at South Station for higher wages, alongside union leaders and elected officials. **D1.**



Loose leaves

Thursday: Breezy, still warm. High 65-70. Low 44-49.

Friday: Sunny but cooler. High 57-62. Low 45-51.

High tide: 5:33 a.m., 5:44 p.m. Sunrise: 7:08 Sunset: 5:48

Weather and Comics, D5-6.

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