

From "Charles River Regional Chamber"
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To coadirector@doverma.org

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Subject Hear directly from these two leaders

Today's Need to Knows, sponsored by Grassi: Watertown's \$1 billion startup | Today's ban du jour | Free community college is an idea worth considering

Good morning friends,

Housing and transportation are two of our region's most stubborn challenges.

And in both cases it feels like not enough is being done quickly enough, right?

In the next few weeks, you'll have a chance to hear directly, in person, from the state's two top leaders charged with addressing both critical needs at upcoming chamber events:

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One week from this morning (May 14, 9:30 a.m. at the Watertown Hampton Inn & Suites) **Transportation Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt** will join us for a discussion about the Healey-Driscoll Administration's plans for improving the state's transportation system. [RSVP](#)

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And today we're announcing that at our upcoming Spring Business Breakfast (June 7, 8 a.m. at the Needham Sheraton) our guest will be **Housing Secretary Ed Augustus**, the point person driving the state's efforts to increase housing production and lower housing costs across Massachusetts. [RSVP](#)

Please join us for both important — and timely — conversations.

Watertown's \$1 billion startup

Swiss drug giant Novartis is paying \$1 billion (plus \$ 750 million in potential milestone payments) to acquire Watertown startup [Mariana Oncology](#).

Not bad for a company [launched just three years ago](#).

Mariana (formerly Curie Therapeutics) is working to make radiation treatment more precise for small cell lung and other types of cancers, reports Hannah Green [at the BBJ](#).

The company is headquartered at [100 Forge](#), that nine-story life science building at Arsenal Yards. A Novartis spokesperson told Green no staff reductions are planned.

Ban du jour: Tobacco sales in Newton

Later this spring the Newton City Council will decide if it wants to follow the lead of Brookline and other municipalities by banning the sale of tobacco or e-cigarette products to anyone born after Jan.1, 2004.

It's easy to understand why: After all, there is nothing redeeming about these products.

However, before the councilors act, we hope they'll pause to think about the 36 Newton retailers who will inevitably lose sales to neighboring communities and, likely, not just tobacco sales.

"This is the kind of thing that we need all municipalities to get together on, or it's just too easy to cross over and go to, say, Waltham, or Needham, or Watertown to buy your cigarettes," City Council Susan Albright [told the Globe](#). "We need to make it a mass movement."

The ordinance would allow anyone born before Jan. 1, 2004 to keep purchasing in Newton. Anyone born after that date would *forever be prevented* from buying tobacco products in Newton -- no matter how old they become.

So, for example, in three decades, a person who is 51 (or younger) would not be able to purchase cigars to celebrate the birth of a grandchild, or the Pats finally winning another the Super Bowl. But someone who was 52 or older, could.

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court [has already ruled](#) that Brookline's first-in-the-nation generational tobacco ban is legal. Wakefield, Stoneham, and Melrose have since passed their own ordinances.

You can guess how the trade group representing [convenience stores feels about it](#).

How about you? Our board of directors and I would like to know if you support, or oppose, this latest proposed ban? [Email me](#).

Today's grab bag

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1983 Needham HighSchool graduate, Suni Williams, is [headed back to space](#). She'll be one of two astronauts traveling into space aboard Boeing's new Starliner capsule. Williams is set to spend about a week aboard the orbiting laboratory.

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The Town of Wellesley is looking to hire its first [Transportation and Mobility Manager](#).

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If you're growing your brick and mortar business, or looking for new retail, or restaurant space, join us next Friday May 17 at 11 a.m. for our [VirtualSmall Business Leasing 101 Workshop](#), hosted by Graffito.

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Mount Auburn Cemetery has opened four new pedestrian entrances into the historic cemetery. The first rural or garden cemetery in the U.S., [Mount Auburn](#) is a horticultural gem, renowned for birdwatching and other activities, and is the largest green space in Watertown. It's open year-round and free. ([WatertownNews](#))

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Brookline is seeking community [feedback through this survey](#) to guide its plans for the future development of the Chestnut Hill Commercial Area. [More](#).

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Attend Musical Café at Newton City Hall, May 11, 6 p.m., to experience Ukrainian-American culture through performances and culinary delights. Organized by Music, Arts& Fashion Productions in partnership with Solodko Bakery. [Details](#)

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Vendor [registration is now open](#) for the 25th anniversary of Watertown's Faire on the Square.

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Gain valuable insights for small business success at the Small Business Empowerment Series, featuring webinars on fraud prevention and access to credit resources. Happening on May 14 and 21. Spanish interpretation is available. [Register](#).

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All the best to [Commonwealth Beacon's Bruce Mohl](#) who is retiring after 15 years at the helm later this year.

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Chris Allen, the affable and unflappable g.m. at the Newton Marriott is stepping back from the hospitality business after 40 years, including steering the Marriott through the pandemic. Allen also sat on our board and Dining Collaborative committee. He will be greatly missed.

Needham employers, employees can access substance abuse support

Needham-based businesses, workers and their families are eligible for [free support services](#) related to substance use or recovery.

The town's Recovery Coach Services program is run by Angi MacDonnell who first hand experience of both sides of substance use and recovery. In addition to peer support, MacDonnell can provide free Narcan to business and employees.

Free community college: An idea worth consideration

Finally this morning, Senate leaders unveiled a plan yesterday to make community college free for all Massachusetts students as part of its proposed fiscal 2025 budget.

MassEducate would invest \$75.5 million to cover tuition and fees for all residents and offer stipends up to \$1,200 to some low and middle-income students for books, supplies and other costs, [according to State House News](#).

Some worry that the program would cut into enrollment at four-year schools already reeling from a [demographic cliff](#). Proponents counter that community colleges attract a different demographic than four-year colleges, including more diversity in age and minority backgrounds.

The idea also complements a program that [provides up to \\$10K](#) for the top community college graduates transferring into the UMass system.

The Senate proposal would be funded through the millionaires tax, which already funds free community college

programs for nursing students and residents over 25.

And while there are good competing uses for those dollars, free community college could help address several pressing challenges: A better-skilled workforce; a more affordable path to a four-year degree; and the potential to slow the [exodus of young workers](#) from Massachusetts.

It's certainly worth consideration.

That's what you need to know for today — the 200th anniversary of Beethoven's ninth and final symphony — unless you're having trouble sleeping and don't find Major League Baseball [to be boring enough](#).

Greg Reibman (he, him)

President & CEO

[Charles River Regional Chamber](#)

617.244.1688

P.S. If today's newsletter looks a little different, it's because we've just switched email platforms, from Constant Contact to Mail Chimp. I like some of the differences. Others not so much. And I'm still getting the hang of it. Feedback and suggestions welcome.

One week from this morning

A conversation with MassDOT Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt

Tues. May 14, 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Hampton Inn & Suites, 25 Bond Street, Watertown

\$10 for members, \$15 for nonmembers

It's not possible to meet our region's housing, climate, and workforce challenges without a safe, reliable, and accessible transportation system that meets the needs of all users whether they walk, bike, take public transit, or drive.

Join us for a conversation with Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation [Monica Tibbitts-Nutt](#) for an overview of the Healey-Driscoll Administration's plans for improving the state's transportation system and the role we all must play in supporting this effort.

9:30 a.m.: Registration and Networking

10 a.m.: A Conversation with Secretary Tibbitts-Nutt

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free outdoor networking event

Coffee Connect at The Street

Tues. May 21, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

The Green (in front of Bianca facing Rt. 9) at The Street

33 Bolyston Street, Chestnut Hill

free, open to members and those interested in learning more about the chamber

Join us in Chestnut Hill for a Spring Coffee Connect! This destination is so fantastic we've made the event an annual tradition.

Enjoy some morning conversations over coffee while enjoying the generous open air green space in the center of the retail/dining destinations at The Street shopping center.

Coffee Connects are hosted by chamber member businesses throughout our four communities, typically draw upwards of 70 local professionals, and are open to members and those interested in learning more about becoming a member. Attending is a great way to make lots of new connections and get to know the chamber, our members, and our programs.

The event is free and preregistration is requested (plus as an exclusive member benefit, chamber members can preview the RSVP list before the event.)

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Hybrid event

Can new development help school budgets in cities like Newton?

Thurs., May 30 at 7 p.m.

In-person and virtual

Congregation Dorshei Tzedek/Second Church, 60 Highland St, West Newton

Following the contentious January 2024 teacher strike in Newton, renewed attention has been paid to increasing the city budget without increasing tax rates. What role can local development, including increasing the housing supply, play in increasing the tax base and school funding? This talk will explore both the practical implications and research on the potential for new development, particularly an expanded housing supply, to bolster the tax base and, consequently, school funding.

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[Elise Rapoza](#) is MassINC's senior research associate and has studied the fiscal impact of housing in

Spring Business Breakfast

with Housing Sect. Ed Augustus

Fri. June 7, 7 to 9:30 a.m.

Needham Sheraton Ballroom

100 Cabot St, Needham

Housing, our region's competitive future, and a salute to an outstanding member of our business community are on the menu at this year's Spring Business Breakfast, presented by Eastern Bank.

We'll hear from the Commonwealth's first Secretary of Housing and Livable Communities, Ed Augustus, the point person in the Healey-Driscoll Administration on efforts to drive efforts to increase housing production and lower housing costs across Massachusetts.

In addition, we will be honoring Susan Paley who is retiring after leading The Village Bank's community commitment efforts in support of all aspects of the region's civic life, safety net, and cultural vitality for nearly two decades.

Join us before the formal event for coffee and networking in the Needham Sheraton courtyard.

Additional speakers to be announced soon. Reserve your tickets soon, this event always sells out.

REGISTER

TODAY

New event

A Conversation with Colette Phillips

Thurs. June 13, 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Waterstone At The Circle, 385 Chestnut Hill Ave, Cleveland Circle

\$25, open to members & nonmembers

Colette Phillips is an iconic cultural change catalyst, DE&I pioneer, thought leader, innovator, practical visionary, influencer, PR and marketing maven, social commentator, philanthropist, serial entrepreneur, and uber connector. She is the President and CEO of Colette Phillips Communications, Inc. and the founder of Get Konnected!

Join us for a fireside chat with Collette Phillips, Author of [*The Includers: The 7 Traits of Culturally Savvy, Anti-Racist Leaders*](#). Learn to be a leader who is not simply “against racism,” but who actively advocates for diversity, equity, and inclusion as an anti-racist ally.

We'll be serving light refreshments, beer, and wine provided by Waterstone at the Circle.

All registered guests who are present will receive an autographed copy of *The Includers* book, in partnership with Wellesley Books.

5:30 PM: Networking

6:00 PM: A Conversation with Collette Phillips

**REGISTE
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EVENT PARTNER



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Emerald Partners

Sapphire Partners

Diamond Partners

Gold Partners

JOIN THE CHAMBER

Support our community, strengthen our advocacy
& access resources to grow your business.

OUR MISSION

is to champion our communities' economic
and cultural vitality through education, advocacy and networking.

OUR TEAM

[Greg Reibman](#), President & CEO

[Lise Ann Q. Elcock](#), VP, Membership & Development

[Katherine Herer](#), VP, Operations

[Tracey Aldrich Antaya](#), Membership Engagement Director

[Theresa Fitzpatrick](#), Programs & Events Manager

[Maxime Isaac](#), Member Services Manager

EVENTS REFUND POLICY

Unless otherwise noted, event registrations are transferrable but not refundable.

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