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CHOOSE FRAMINGHAM NEWSLETTER



Choose Framingham Newsletter
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Framingham Colleges

Mayor Yvonne Spicer Kicks Off First

Receive Early College Program Designation

Framingham's local colleges, Framingham State University (FSU) and MassBay Community College, have received a \$10,000 planning grant from the Baker-Polito Administration that will help them as they work to be designated Early College Programs by the Massachusetts Boards of Higher Education and Elementary and Secondary Education. The grant was [announced](#) by FSU on February 8th.

According to the announcement, "Early College Programs combine traditional high school courses with an opportunity to earn college credit at a public college or university, typically in a particular career pathway, such as business management, education, sociology and criminal justice, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) life sciences." Outreach to students begins in middle school and will help support underrepresented students in Framingham and Milford Public Schools to participate in early college programs.

"Preparing students for the rigors of college-level courses while they are still in high school eases the transition to college and makes it more likely that they will succeed," said FSU President F. Javier Cevallos about the initiative. "This is a fantastic opportunity to provide underrepresented students with greater access to early college programs."

"MassBay is excited to build on our partnership with Framingham State University to help more high school students access college education early," said MassBay President David

Community Conversation

Highlights Economic Development and Downtown Framingham's Building Boom



Mayor Yvonne Spicer with Arthur Robert at Community Conversation

On Wednesday, February 28, Mayor Yvonne Spicer held her first "Community Conversation," a public forum for local residents and business owners to discuss issues related to Framingham. The topic for this inaugural conversation was the city's economic development. With an estimated 75 attendees in the room, Mayor Spicer and Arthur Robert, Framingham's Director of Community and Economic Development, discussed the challenges facing the downtown area, while also highlighting the vast

opportunities.

The focus of much of the discussion was the effort to boost transit-oriented development in Downtown Framingham. Art Robert highlighted the new projects already in development, which will help in attracting other new businesses and developments going forward. Pointing to transit-oriented projects in the area that have had success like Modera Natick Center and Cronin's Landing in Waltham, both Mayor Spicer and Robert see similar success for Downtown Framingham. With two projects currently underway at 75 Concord Street and 266 Waverly Avenue, Mayor Spicer and the Office of Community and Economic Development are looking forward - and to what's next.

At the conversation, Mayor Spicer said that she wants to hear from younger people about their needs, especially when it comes to Downtown Framingham, but also in other neighborhoods. "My hope and my vision for downtown is that it becomes a destination rather than people just going here or there," said Mayor Spicer.

Recent changes to district zoning and permitting have paved the way for companies looking to establish - or expand - in Framingham, and city officials have tried to identify ways to bring new businesses into the community. Concerns were raised at the event around parking and density - issues the Community and Economic Development Office have been keenly aware of and working to address.

Podell. "This grant will help us connect more underrepresented high school students with free access to college-level courses during a time when the cost for a college education is at a premium."

In September 2017, Choose Framingham held an [event](#) focused on Life Sciences, at which Dr. Margaret Carroll, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics at FSU spoke of strengthening ties between the school and the region's Life Sciences sector. "Engaging students early in these industries is important to nurturing the workforce for the kinds of companies that help keep Framingham and the MetroWest's region's economy strong," said Arthur Robert, Director of Framingham's Community and Economic Development division. "It is encouraging to see FSU, MassBay Community College and the Baker-Polito Administration find ways to strengthen those ties."

Framingham's Brewery Boom

Our local Framingham breweries are making an impact - and not just in Framingham. [Ratebeer.com](#), a site for craft beer enthusiasts widely recognized as the most in-depth, accurate, and one of the most-visited sources for beer information has recognized [Jack's Abby](#) Craft Lagers as "Best Brewery Taproom," and [Exhibit 'A' Brewing](#) as the "Best New Brewer."

For Jack's Abby, this marks their third year in a row to receive the "Best Brewery Taproom" award. 2017 was Exhibit A's first full year in the market, and has come out making a great impression on beer drinkers everywhere.

"The event offered a great opportunity to share solid progress in attracting new downtown investment, and outline next steps toward creating our downtown as an attractive, vibrant, and diverse economic center in the Metrowest region," said Art Robert. "More importantly, though, it was a great opportunity to answer questions and understand community concerns. Insights gained at the event will help guide our work - and help make our downtown a better place for residents and businesses."

You can read more about the Community Conversation at the [MetroWest Daily News](#).

Downtown Framingham's Transit-Oriented Development Accelerates

Years of hard work by those seeking to revitalize Framingham's Downtown is beginning to pay off, as the neighborhood will soon see new transit-oriented development (TOD) breaking ground. Over the past few years, the Planning Board has approved almost 900 units of housing for the downtown area, and over the next several months, many of those projects will begin construction.

The first project to move to construction is the development by Wood Partners at 75 Concord Street. The development will bring 196 new market-rate and affordable housing to downtown. Demolition is already underway and we anticipate that a groundbreaking ceremony for this important project will be held this spring.



We expect to soon see demolition taking place at 266 Waverly Street, which will be home to Mill Creek's Modera Framingham development. That project is permitted for 270 new units of multifamily housing that will enliven the downtown. In addition to those two important developments, the Planning Board has permitted 16 new apartments at 68 South Street, 256 new units for 59 Fountain Street, and 75 new apartment homes at 54 Union Street. Furthermore, the board is currently reviewing a proposal to bring another 96 units to Concord Street.

When, in 2015, Special Town Meeting members voted in overwhelming numbers to support zoning changes to

Awards from Ratebeer.com are based on website reviews from the company's hundreds of thousands of members around the world.

Framingham's Central Business District, they did so with the goal to make Downtown Framingham an attractive, vibrant, diverse center that will be a hub of economic activity for MetroWest. So it is especially encouraging to see that their vision is coming to fruition so robustly in so short a time frame. Previous zoning laws had discouraged developers from creating the kind of new units that appeal to young professionals and others who may otherwise be attracted to Framingham. The rezoning has been critical to encouraging the kinds of TOD projects we're beginning to see break ground.

Boston SCORE Offers Weekly Free Business Counseling in Framingham

Are you looking for guidance in turning your idea into a business? Or are you a Metrowest small business owner looking to grow? [SCORE Boston](#) has recently begun providing free guidance to Framingham-area entrepreneurs and business owners. Every Monday, from 10 am to 2 pm, representatives from the Greater Boston Chapter of SCORE are available at the Framingham Library to help those who want to start or grow a commercial enterprise.

"After providing counseling services in other parts of the region, we found that demand for our services for the Framingham area was really high," said SCORE Boston counselor Barry Charton. "Many of us live in the area, and we're happy to be providing these services locally."

A 50 year old organization, SCORE is funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration. An organization of volunteers, the nonprofit utilizes the services of experienced business executives, both retired and working, to provide mentoring in management, operations, and more. According to Charton, the individuals in Framingham they are working with run the gamut in terms of their business size and type. But, he says, between 70 to 80 percent are looking to start a business. Others are either looking to buy or sell a small business. The final group are owners looking to fine-tune or address a weakness within their current enterprise.

Charton's diverse experience - he worked for a number of high tech companies, including Digital Equipment Corporation, then ran a community center and owned a retail business - has helped prepare him for this role. "People should not hesitate to sign up and try this counseling, if they think people with experience can help them," said Charton. "They should also know that if I see that a client needs something that I can't help them with, I will refer the client to another counselor who can

assist them. We'll meet as often as needed and we're always available by email, if something comes up."

For more information on SCORE Boston, please visit their [website](#). Additionally, the organization will be offering a special session - an all day workshop celebrating women's entrepreneurship - at the Sheraton Framingham in May, so stay tuned for more information on that event.

Framingham EDIC

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The [Framingham Economic Development and Industrial Corporation \(EDIC\)](#) was established in 1995 to stimulate economic development and expand employment opportunities in the Town of Framingham in accordance with the town's approved economic development plans.

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