

## WELCOME TO THE CHOOSE FRAMINGHAM NEWSLETTER



**Choose Framingham Newsletter**  
**June 30, 2019 - In This Issue:**

**Alta Union House**

**Framingham Is Open for Business**  
**- 92 Blandin Avenue**

**Irving Street Park**

**Downtown Framingham, Inc.**

**Newly Opened Downtown**  
**Framingham Restaurants**





## Downtown Framingham, Inc.

Making a difference downtown

Courtney Thraen, [Downtown Framingham, Inc.](#) (DFI) Director, and her small team of hard-working interns, continue to help activate and promote the downtown. Key activities generally follow the National Mainstreets model and include, promoting the district, improving the way things look, working to strengthen existing businesses, and creating events that bring people downtown. Earlier in the month, Thraen organized a beautification project across from downtown MBTA station. DFI partnered with [Bose](#), [Republic Plumbing](#), [Miranda Bread](#), the [Facilities Department](#), and the [Department of Public Works](#) to install loam and mulch along a 350-foot streetscape area. With support from [Wegmans](#) and [State Rep. Jack P. Lewis](#), DFI installed 58 bushes and over 100 flower bulbs along this stretch.

## Alta Union House - Lease Up Underway

*Bringing new residents to Downtown this summer*

[Alta Union House](#) is a 196-unit rental community featuring a mix of one, two and three bedroom apartment homes. The property is located at 55 Concord Street in Downtown Framingham, conveniently located just a three minute walk to the [Framingham Commuter Rail station](#).



The apartments feature white quartz counter tops, designer wood-style plank flooring, convenient in-home washer and dryer, and stainless steel, energy efficient appliances. Many units have private balconies and all residents of Alta Union House can enjoy the saltwater pool, pet spa, tech lounge, fitness center, featuring Pelotons and game-filled outdoor amenity space.



Construction is near completion with the first move-ins expected the last week of July 2019.

This is the first major project completed after the City of Framingham revamped its downtown zoning in 2015 to encourage transit-oriented development (TOD). This project fills



DFI hosted a booth at [MetroFest](#) in June where participants played a storefront matching game to raise awareness of the stores that are located in Downtown. Thraen also talked with MetroFest attendees about continued business growth and upcoming placemaking activities. DFI recently unveiled a new beautification project this month. In partnership with Department of Public Works, [Framingham History Center](#), and [ICL Imaging](#), they wrapped seven utility boxes along Route 126 with historic images and descriptions.



Each historic photo is surrounded by international flags to demonstrate how the area's diversity is the strength and foundation for the theme "Thriving Through Time".

Thraen and her crew participated in the Flag Day parade as they partnered with [Cav Audio Video Design](#) to bring the BTS live band through downtown Framingham on a landscaping trailer provided by

in a vacant parking lot that occupied a prominent place in the center of downtown and completes the skyline. It is a modern building but follows the design guidelines, complementing the downtown's existing beautiful historic structures. The project also includes 20 affordable units. Given all this, the project is a major step toward transitioning our downtown to an exciting and diverse urban center. As the first mover in an untested market, the City worked with the developer, [Wood Partners](#), on a tax-increment financing agreement based on an Urban Center Housing Plan filed with the [Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development](#). If interested in learning more information about Alta Union House, please visit [www.liveauh.com](http://www.liveauh.com) or call 833.658.5613 to schedule your tour today!



## Framingham Is Open for Business - 92 Blandin Avenue

Since purchasing 92 Blandin Avenue in 2015, the [Stonegate Group](#) has made a number of important improvements to the property, including a new roof, signage, parking lot improvements, various building improvements, energy-efficient lighting as well as a 1,070kW rooftop solar energy system completed in 2018.



Bullard Building, LLC. DFI dispersed reusable shopping bags along the route to encourage community growth and sustainability. DFI also partnered with [Exhibit 'A' Brewing Co., n+1 Cyclery](#), and [Papa Wheelies](#) at [BrewCycle](#) to explore the latest in cycling education, advocacy, fashion, fitness, and technology.

"Whether online or in-person, thank you to everyone from around New England that has contacted our organization to proclaim their active affinity for downtown Framingham. This community-driven show of confidence is invaluable for the numerous family-run businesses that deliver sustained vitality day-in and day-out. DFI couldn't possibly complete so many events and responsive projects without this strong backing."

- Courtney Thraen

DFI started [The Burkis Square Betterment Project](#) which is a community-driven fundraiser to install a Business Support Detail to create a welcoming, productive business center through liaison duties with local officials. They have been infusing Burkis Square streetscapes with classical music on "Mozart Mondays" to boost productivity and brainpower while lowering stress and blood pressure. Most recently, Thraen organized the [Creative Economy & Cultural Tour](#). The fast-paced, fast-moving tour highlighted Harmony Grove's history and culture, underscored the ecology of Farm Pond, and provided participants an opportunity to create their own swan art.

These activities are just a few of the projects DFI has been working on.

Shortly after acquiring the property, the occupancy rate dipped to the mid-30% range. Today the building is over 90% occupied with one remaining unit available for lease (a 22,454 square foot high-bay industrial space).

The businesses at 92 Blandin Ave are a diverse group including [Phoenix Trading Company](#) (retail), [DetraPel](#) (tech) and the [MetroWest Dance Academy](#) (creative economy). This month, Choose Framingham spoke with representatives of these companies to learn more about them. Other companies at this location include Show Rig Boston, Philips Lifeline, West Springfield Auto Parts, C&R Flooring, and United Way of Tri-County.

### ***Phoenix Trading Company***

Marc Cohen, the President of [Phoenix Trading Company](#), talked about why they have found Framingham to be the ideal location to grow the company.

#### **Tell us a little about Phoenix Trading Company - what do you do?**

Phoenix Trading Company (PTC) is a direct-to-consumer (B2C), online retailer of off-price merchandise. The Company sells a wide variety of branded merchandise, but specializes in plus size women's apparel, health & beauty products and home goods. Our primary sales channels are online, 3rd-party marketplaces such as eBay, Sears, Walmart, and Kmart among a few others.

#### **Tell us a little more about your history - how did you start and why did you end up choosing Framingham as a location?**

In 1999, I left my career as an engineer in the defense industry to join a dotcom. When the "bubble" burst, I picked up the pieces, subleased 700 sq ft from a machine shop, and started Phoenix Trading. Our space requirements grew over the years, and now we occupy 18,000 sq ft here on Blandin Ave. The space is ideal for our operation, super cost-effective, with good access to a hard-working labor force.

#### **Describe how you benefit from being in the space on Blandin Avenue and what you like best about that location.**

The space itself is very efficient for us. It's an old building, but there have been significant upgrades. There is plenty of room for the tractor-trailers which pull up to our docks weekly. There is also a great selection of interesting little restaurants when I need a quick lunch.

#### **What do your employees like best about being located in Framingham?**

The staff appreciates the easy access. About half of our people live in Framingham, the others, including myself, live east of

Check out their [website](#) for upcoming activities and get on their mailing list for regular updates, swing by [Sofá Café](#) to view the first art gallery installation from DFI, or join some locals for some [outside yoga](#) on the Downtown Common every Saturday through September 21.

## Newly Opened Downtown Framingham Restaurants

### Los Pinos, Mini Bites, Franklin Street Café

Three restaurants have opened in downtown Framingham in the last couple of months, adding a range of fare highlighting the area's diversity.



Los Pinos opened at 183 Concord Street, serving Mexican and Salvadoran food all-day, while providing a modern feel, free wifi and their ice cream is not to be missed. Their hours are 5:30AM-10PM Monday through Saturday and 7AM-10PM on Sunday.

here. The reverse commuter traffic and proximity to major roadways makes it an easy commute.

Customers can find them [online](#) at or follow them on [Facebook](#).

### ***DetraPel***

Choose Framingham also caught up with David Zamarin at [DetraPel](#) to find out more about his growing tech company.

#### **Tell us a little about DetraPel.**

Our company manufactures superhydrophobic non-toxic coatings that prolong the life of your favorite belongings. Using innovative nanotechnology, DetraPel liquid repellents create harmless, PFAS-Free, invisible barriers that protect your items from damage caused by water, other liquids and even food! The benefits and surfaces are endless based on the technology. Whether you want to protect your white carpet from wine stains, your new shoes from getting dirty outside, or your car seats from morning rush-hour coffee spills, DetraPel has got you covered.

DetraPel's guiding philosophy lies in our commitment to provide non-toxic protective coatings that do not contain harmful fluoroochemicals. Unlike the vast amount of carcinogenic chemicals currently present in widely used products from other manufacturers, we reject incorporating toxic components in our production. We have developed a line of products that people can use without the fear of harming themselves, their children, friends, pets or planet. We believe our ability to lead by example will make a significant impact on the chemical manufacturing industry.

#### **What brought you to Framingham?**

When looking for a place to settle our headquarters in, we looked for striking the right partnership with the right people. Stonegate LLC was a big portion of the reason we chose Framingham. The environment and central location was key for manufacturing and logistics. Overall, we were convinced that we could attract talent to our Shark-Tank featured company and could retain the talent because of the area. With Framingham's expansion plans, we expect our growth to interdependently work with the local government and hope that we can give back to the families of Framingham.

You can find more information about DetraPel at their [website](#) or on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

### ***MetroWest Dance Academy***

Choose Framingham lastly caught up with Gemma Williams, the Director of [Metrowest Dance Academy](#).

#### **What type of space were you looking for?**



[Mini Bites Factory](#) opened at 158 Union Avenue, serving mouth-watering Brazilian food. The take-out only business is open 11AM-9PM Monday through Thursday, 11AM-10PM on Friday and Saturday and 10AM-7PM on Sunday. Both savory and sweet options include favorites like buffalo chicken, four cheese, and caramel. Their scrumptious bites are also available through their catering business and home delivery. They have another location in Everett.



The [Franklin St Café](#) has just opened their doors, near the historic Harmony Grove site, serving Brazilian and American food and fine coffee. Franklin St Café is open 6AM-9PM Monday through Friday and 7AM-10PM on Saturday and Sunday. There is a ribbon cutting scheduled for Tuesday, July 2 at 10AM.

All three restaurants are within walking distance of each other and new residential options, supplying excellent and unique food for downtown visitors and local residents.

I had been looking for a very large open plan space to house dance studios and sizeable reception area so that families would have the space to relax while waiting for their children. I found just that at 92 Blandin Avenue and additionally the space is entirely lined with huge windows throwing natural light across the whole length of the school. We love it!

#### **Why did you choose Framingham?**

The site is situated very close to downtown and this means that families can enjoy the local area as they wait. We have students from Framingham and surrounding towns that can easily drive to our studio. We also employ teachers and trainee teachers from Boston Conservatory at Berklee that use the commuter rail in downtown Framingham, which is only a 10-minute walk away. Learn more at [their website](#).

For more information on the unit still available for lease, contact [Marlene Aron of Metrowest Commercial Real Estate](#).

## **Irving Street Park**

*\$50,000 goal has been reached!*



Last month [Choose Framingham](#) reported that the City was working with [Patronicity](#), a community crowdfunding website, and [MassDevelopment](#) on a campaign to raise money for a new pocket park on the Southside of Framingham. The campaign was an "all-or-nothing" plea for \$50,000 within a 60-day deadline in order to unlock a 1:1 match through MassDevelopment. A few days ago, the campaign announced on its Facebook page that it made the match, resulting in a grand total of \$105,855 in support