



CITY of BEVERLY
OFFICE of the MAYOR

191 Cabot Street
Beverly, Massachusetts 01915
Phone (978) 921-6000
Fax (978) 922-0285

Mayor

Michael P. Cahill

Chief of Staff

Kevin Harutunian

Executive Secretary

Martha A. Lewis

State of the City Address

Michael P. Cahill

February 22, 2016

Thank you Mr. President.

Good evening, members of the City Council, School Committee members, Superintendent Hiersche, department heads and other colleagues in Beverly's city government. Thank you for being here tonight. I am excited to share our 2016 state of the city. First, I want to thank all the many good people who contribute to the well-being and the advancement of our great city – city employees, neighborhood and civic groups, the hundreds of volunteers who serve on city boards and commissions, and the great entrepreneurs who invest their time, money, and ideas to make this city great.

As we embark on the 2016-17 term in Beverly, let's take a moment to reflect on some success we have shared over the last year.

On our harbor front, we eliminated the decades old Designated Port Area, which limited development. We then re-zoned this same stretch of harbor front, setting the stage for thoughtful mixed-use development, which will bring residential retail activity, and improved public access to our harbor while protecting all existing uses.

We built new bathroom facilities at Lynch Park and Obear Park, while vastly improving the bath house at Dane Street Beach. We built a new play structure at Lynch Park and a first for Beverly – a Splash Pad – adjacent to it, which together have been a great resource and attraction

for Beverly families. We installed the new French doors and transom windows in the Carriage House opening views of the ocean beyond. Also, at Lynch Park, we have improved safety within the park by instituting a one-way traffic pattern and installing a gate to limit vehicle traffic along the driveway.

The City took several steps to permanently protect important open spaces with over 150 acres of land preserved. Utilizing multiple funding sources, the City purchased the former Girl Scout Camp at 44 Cole Street preserving the 12 acre parcel for open space and recreational uses. We also worked closely with Essex Country Greenbelt to place a permanent conservation restriction on City owned land adjacent to and including Norwood Pond. The 133.5 acre property will now be preserved in its natural state for residents to enjoy. Most recently the City accepted approximately 8.7 acres of open space of land at Kelleher's Pond. By accepting this property, the City ensures public access to the pond for future generations.

This past year we improved supportive services and programming for our vibrant senior and veteran communities. In collaboration with the Council on Aging, we held the first ever Mayor's Symposium for Older adults, a free, open-to-the-public event for seniors, families and friends of seniors interested in learning about resources available for older adults in Beverly. The event included two expert panels, and a resource fair. There are many great resources for our aging population, and this event was a great opportunity for people to ask questions and explore all that we have to offer. We also brought back our downtown Memorial Day Parade. Thanks to the hard work of our Veterans community, it was a huge success as thousands of spectators of all ages joined in remembering our local heroes.

For the third straight year, I will recommend to the City Council that we make significant investments in our local roads and sidewalks. The need is great, and we can only do so much in

one year. But, we will invest as much as we can to fix our roads and sidewalks to keep this city safe and to keep it great.

The Route 1A/Rantoul Street project kicked off last August and will continue for the next two years. A completion date of October 2017 is required by the State. Over \$25 million of improvements come with this project. This complete streetscape improvement project will include new trees, street lighting, and bike lanes, all of which will make the street more liveable and drivable. In particular, pedestrian crossings at key intersections will be shortened with bump outs that will be created to improve safety. Our Chief of Staff, Kevin Harutunian, chairs a Route 1A project committee tasked with minimizing the impact of construction on neighbors and business owners. Anyone with interest in this project should call my office and speak with Kevin.

We are pursuing a significant local road project -- the improvement of Broadway, the key connection between the Beverly Depot and Rantoul Street neighborhood to Cabot Street. We envision streetscape improvements similar to those on Rantoul. A reconstructed and improved Broadway will have an incredibly positive impact on our continued downtown revitalization. For this reason, we are applying to the State for Complete Streets Funding to help make the Broadway improvements a reality.

The Brimbal Avenue Phase I project has been substantially built and will be complete this summer. We have been working with State economic development and transportation officials to identify a plan for financing Phase II which will likely require multiple funding streams and public/private partnerships. This remains a priority for the coming year.

Staying with infrastructure, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation recently approved two more Beverly projects for inclusion on the State's Transportation Improvement

Plan. First, a plan to improve three intersections known as the Henry's Market intersection on Route 1A, the Balch Street and McKay Street intersection by the Beverly Golf and Tennis Club, and the intersection at the foot of the Beverly-Salem Bridge on Route 1A. The second project is Bridge Street in Ryal Side along with the intersection at Bridge and River Street behind the Beverly Depot train station. The next step for these projects will be for the city to design after which we can secure State funding for construction.

We have had an exciting year at the City's airport as well with significant runway and lighting improvements, a name change to the "Beverly Regional Airport" and construction starting on a new administration building. This new building, funded primarily with federal dollars, will support airport operations and welcome both corporate and recreational air traffic to our region.

On the financial front, we have taken steps to keep faith with taxpayers and manage the City's affairs wisely.

There has been a significant multi-year backlog in past due taxes. By putting better controls in place and aggressively pursuing these back taxes, this fiscal year, we have already collected over \$1.25M in back taxes owed. And we are ensuring this will not happen again. We will keep faith with the vast majority of taxpayers who always pay on time, and we will help those who find themselves in financial difficulty by requiring they face their problems immediately and preventing their further financial distress.

This past year, we partnered with MIIA, the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association, to improve the city's insurance coverage. This is a program focused on risk aversion through strengthened policies, training and capital maintenance programs. To date, we have realized annual savings of \$100,000.

Again, last year, we deposited funds into the City's stabilization, or rainy day, fund. The balance is now over \$6.75 million, and we plan to make additional deposits in coming fiscal years.

Significant re-zoning efforts consistent with the City's Master Plan are underway to tap the full potential of our downtown and our multiple waterfronts. A proposal is currently before the City Council to creatively allow more uses in our downtown such as craft breweries, artist live/work spaces, and shared maker spaces as incubators for small scale entrepreneurs. Also, the Bass River re-zoning proposal is being finalized over the next several weeks, and we plan to present this to the City Council by April. Offering mixed use redevelopment opportunities on River Street along the Bass River presents perhaps the greatest transit oriented development opportunity in New England. Officials in Governor Baker's administration are excited and very supportive, as high quality housing immediately across the street from the Beverly Depot train station can meet a significant regional need for workforce housing while promoting economic investment throughout our downtown.

So much has happened in downtown Beverly in a year's time. The Cabot Theatre is thriving. So are The Atomic Café, A&B Burgers, and Kat's Kafe on Cabot Street. On Rantoul Street, Castle, the new game board café in the old Harry's 240 or Sun Ray Bakery building, as well as Jackie's Tees right next door, and Flourish Bakery in the Enterprise Building are all flourishing. Hugo Bookstore is scheduled to open on Cabot Street this spring adjacent to and in partnership with the Atomic Café. My administration has worked closely with several of these businesses to help them move effectively through local permitting and/or to find success once in place. I've said it before and it bears repeating –entrepreneurs who want to invest their time, vision and money, who want to follow their dreams and make Beverly their home – as long as

what they propose is good for Beverly -- we want to work with them. And we will be their partner in improving this City. Our Project Review Team and I are here and ready to help.

This past year, we also created the Business Round Table, bringing together local business leaders with city officials for regular meetings, ensuring communication on individual projects, and optimizing collaborations.

Last year, with our great partners at Montserrat College of Art and Beverly Main Streets, we convinced the State to designate a large section of Cabot Street as a Massachusetts Cultural District, something that will bring real resources and welcome attention to Beverly.

Also, thanks to Beverly Main Streets and location Community Preservation Funds, Ellis Square will be transformed this year into a brighter, more welcoming and useful public space right in the middle of downtown.

As I've already stated, a big key to a lasting, successful downtown will be the creation of significant high quality transit-oriented development. The Windover Companies in particular have made a commitment to bring that housing to Rantoul Street and the neighborhood around the Beverly Depot. They have already built the Depot Square Condominiums, as well as the Enterprise and Burnham Apartments. They are currently building 32 new units at the former McKay School, 72 new units at 131 Rantoul Street and have been permitted to build 62 new units along Beverly harbor at the former Ventron property. Windover is proving to be a strong partner for Beverly. They work in good faith to partner with their neighbors, they build high quality, and they are incredibly invested philanthropically in the community. We welcome more opportunities to partner with them.

Recently, working with the City Council, we succeeded in signing a deal with Krohne Company, a Germany company that manufactures flow meters and other products that measure

volume, to relocate their North American headquarters to Cherry Hill industrial park in Beverly. They will bring over 50 existing jobs to Beverly, invest \$20 million to build a new facility, then bring 55 – 60 new jobs as they plan to commence clean manufacturing of several of their products right here in Beverly. Significant new property tax value created and 55-60 new, good paying jobs. This adds up to a big win for our city.

Turning to education, the Beverly Public Schools have had a great year. Our students consistently achieve at a high level both academically and across the spectrum of extra-curricular activities. We are blessed with dedicated, accomplished teachers and administration. The Beverly Public Schools are outstanding and world class. Together we strive every day to become one of the top school districts in the world.

Aiding this effort will be our new middle school. This past year, we beat timetables and saved money consistently on this project. We reached a Project Funding Agreement with the State and received unanimous funding approval by our City Council. Demolition of the Memorial Building began on January 4th. Once the existing building is removed, 1,200 sub-soil support pilings will be driven into the ground this spring. By summer, we will be pouring the foundations and later this year, the structural steel will be erected. The new middle school is on schedule to be completed by summer 2018 and ready to open the 2018-19 school year. This school will house over 1,400 grade 5 – 8 students organized into separate grade 5/6 and 7/8 learning academies. Highlights will include a library/media center, four maker spaces and four STEAM laboratories, two separate cafeterias, two full-sized basketball courts, a fitness room, a full-sized auditorium with related band/choral and fine arts space, and an outdoor learning center. Once opened, with fifth grade moving to the new middle school, our five elementary

schools will gain significant classroom space allowing them to address current space issues and better serve our elementary population.

Also on the school front, new stands have been installed at Hurd Stadium, all on what had traditionally been the visitor side of the field. In addition, our Department of Public Services crews are improving the hillside on what had been the home side to accommodate those who want to stand or sit on the grass.

Last year, we reached agreement with Blue Wave Solar to lease them rights to build a solar canopy array over the main parking lot at Beverly High School, as well as a ground mounted array on the hillside next to our existing photovoltaic array. Blue Wave will pay the City an average of \$116,000 annually for twenty years, which we will invest in our schools.

This past year saw real progress on the city's efforts to site a waterfront restaurant at the old MacDonald's site. Removing the DPA was a big step forward. The request for proposals process we undertook also helped as it highlighted clearly the space challenges inherent in the site. Using this knowledge, we are working with Baker Administration officials to refine key components of the RFP. We plan to issue this new RFP soon and expect to award a successful proposal by summer to be followed immediately by state and local permitting, leading to construction of our new waterfront restaurant commencing in 2017.

For over a year, we have worked cooperatively with our neighbors in Salem, Peabody and Danvers to address housing needs in our region. We all agree that the need is real – for senior housing at all income levels and across the spectrum of care, for workforce and family housing – both market rate and at different levels of affordability, and for housing to help individuals and families avoid homelessness. Together with Mayors Driscoll and Bettencourt and Town Manager Bartha, we hope to put a specific plan forward in the near future.

Evidencing Beverly's recognition of our regional need and commitment to being part of the solution, we are preparing an application to the State to create a 40R housing district on a single parcel of land at the corner of Sohier Road and Tozer Road. Working in partnership with Harborlight Community Partners, we will ask the City Council who have been briefed on the proposal – to support creation of the 40R district. Harborlight proposes to build 61 units of housing, 41 units of which will be workforce housing serving families making an average of \$55,000 per year, while 20 units will serve our lowest income families, some of whom are at risk of being or are homeless. We have worked closely with Harborlight and our school administration to ensure that we can accommodate the children expected to live here in our schools. We project 4 – 5 additional students per grade level. We also project that this development will not be completed until the new middle school is open. We all are confident we have the capacity to serve these children, some of whom are likely already living in Beverly but in much less stable situations.

We are also working closely with state officials and our legislators to ensure 40R and 40S funding – 40R provides a one-time payment to the city when the project is built, 40S provides annual additional educational funding to our schools based on the actual number of students who come with the development. In short, we are moving thoughtfully and confidently forward with a project that will meet a great need for safe, affordable housing in Beverly while providing the resources we will need as a city to continue to provide services for the whole community.

One year ago, we convened a Drug Task Force with a goal of fighting back against the drug epidemic facing all communities today. We have made real strides. We have great partners in Beverly Hospital, D.A. Jonathan Blodgett and his office, our own Beverly Police Department, Public Health Department and Beverly Public Schools. We have hosted several very successful

education and prevention programs for our high school and middle school students. We hosted a one day drop off site for safe disposal of prescription drugs, and plan 2 -3 more for this year. We are also close to announcing one or more new permanent drop-off sites for the same purpose. District Attorney Blodgett runs a highly successful drug diversion program to help addicts get needed medical help as they enter the criminal court system. We are working to help him expand this program and facilitate its use locally. Tragically, drug addiction has killed many more Beverly residents again this past year. Our efforts have been worthwhile and they are making a difference. Yet, there is so much more to do, and we will rededicate ourselves to make more of a difference this coming year. Anyone who wants to help, please come see me. Your participation is welcome.

Last summer, we launched our first Summer Learning Initiative. With the help of our lead partner, the Greater Beverly Y, who ran the program, we provided sixty incoming Beverly first graders with three hours a day of literacy learning every weekday morning for six weeks. Each afternoon, they enjoyed traditional summer camp activities at the Y. The results were overwhelming, as children consistently made great gains in literacy readiness. In fact, the September first grade testing results for all 360 first graders were significantly better than past years with the summer program enjoyed by our 60 students being the only identified variable. Key financial partners included Endicott College, Beverly Bank, Cummings Properties, Peoples United Bank, Windover Properties and Lahey North – Beverly Hospital. This summer, we plan to double the program by offering it to 120 children – 60 incoming first graders and 60 incoming second graders. We anticipate needing a budget of \$120,000 and have already received increased commitments from some of our summer 2015 partners.

Our planning department has just commenced a housing study, funded by community preservation funds, which will be completed by June. The study will conduct a comprehensive analysis, telling us what types of housing are needed in what amount amounts in Beverly over the next 5 – 10 years. Results of this study will help firm up our housing goals going forward.

In the coming months, we will conduct a parking study to help determine current utilization of municipal parking. Key outcomes of the study will be to identify a plan to:

- Better provide parking for residents, businesses and visitors, and
- Continue to facilitate strong, positive economic growth downtown.

This past year, working with the City council, particularly Councilor Rand, who spearheaded the effort, we created a Human Rights Committee to help provide opportunities to educate about and celebrate the diversity we enjoy in Beverly. At the City Council's March 7th meeting, I will submit nominees to serve on this Committee, and I look forward greatly to the good works they will achieve.

Last, with the new middle school just two years away, it is time to take a careful look at not just the Briscoe Middle School but at all our municipal buildings and assess how best to house and provide all our municipal services in the future. Soon, I will announce the creation of a Municipal Assets Evaluation Committee. The scope of and timetable for its work is currently being finalized as is its makeup. This is an important opportunity, and we will do this right.

Tonight, I have touched on many things – and there are many more worth discussing. This is an exciting time in Beverly. The energy is real. The open, transparent process we all committed to when first elected is bearing fruit. Together, we are being thoughtful and measured. Thus, when we decide to act, we act with conviction. Great things are happening all throughout

Beverly. We haven't and won't get everything right on the first try. Yet as long as the good people of Beverly continue to be willing to work with us, I am confident we will keep moving Beverly forward. We all choose to call Beverly home. We all care about our great city so to every Beverly resident, keep bringing your ideas, your goodwill and your energy to the table. And, we will make 2016 a great year.