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THE BACK BAY SUN

A GRAND MEETING

**BBA DRAWS A CAPACITY CROWD AT THE
FAIRMONT COPLEY PLAZA. PAGE 8.**



BBA holds its 86th annual meeting

By Dan Murphy

THE BACK BAY ASSOCIATION HELD ITS 86TH ANNUAL MEETING AT THE Fairmont Copley Plaza on May 13, drawing a capacity crowd of neighborhood business people, elected officials and other dignitaries.

BBA Chairman and Senior Vice President and Regional Manager of Boston Properties Bryan Koop welcomed the crowd and traced the history of the neighborhood from its creation from a landfill in the late 19th century to the present day. He also emphasized the beneficial influence the BBA has in the Back Bay today.

"We must focus on our charter to initiate programs that improve, promote and protect business in the Back Bay," Koop said. "We're known for being the positive group."

Meg Mainzer-Cohen, executive director of the non-profit BBA since 2000, spoke of the past year's achievements. The BBA held positions on numerous citizen advisory commissions and groups that oversaw the development process in the

Back Bay, including the approval of a new commercial building on 350 Boylston St. proposed by The Druker Company, the demolition and redevelopment of 4-6 Newbury St. and approval of 888 Boylston St. by Boston Properties and Exeter Street Residences by AvalonBay Communities Inc.

The BBA also participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Mandarin Oriental, Boston, and last November, the luxury hotel served as the site of the group's Best of Back Bay 2008, which Mainzer-Cohen called "the most successful event in our history." The Best of Back Bay 2009 is scheduled to take place at the Four Seasons Hotel on Tuesday, Nov. 10, she said.

Looking ahead, Mainzer-Cohen said the BBA would launch a new destination Web site in June to promote businesses throughout the neighborhood in June. "Our aim is to drive more business to the Back Bay," she added.

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the meeting's keynote speaker, outlined several of the city's new ini-

tiatives, including Boston World Partnership, a 6-month-old business network for Boston natives now working internationally.

"It's about forward thinking, that's what organizations like this are all about," Menino said, likening this progress to the work of the BBA. "The status quo doesn't work if you're falling behind."

At the meeting, Sharon Reilly, executive director of the Women's Lunch Place, a Back Bay-based

daytime shelter for poor and homeless women, was awarded the BBA Heavy Lifting Award for her contribution for the neighborhood over the past year. Capt. William Evans of the Boston Police Department's District D-4 received the Back Bay Security Network Award on behalf of the Security Network, a BBA-initiated partnership between local businesses and police.



Back Bay Association Chairman Bryan Koop presents Sharon Reilly, executive director of the Women's Lunch Place, with the Heavy Lifting Award.



Back Bay Association Chairman Bryan Koop presents Capt. William Evans with the Back Bay Security Network Award.



Back Bay Association Executive Director Meg Mainzer-Cohen.



Keynote speaker Mayor Thomas M. Menino addresses the crowd at the 86th annual meeting of the Back Bay Association.