



## Back Bay Update with Paul Grogan

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 the Back Bay Association featured Paul Grogan, President of the Boston Foundation, as a guest speaker for a “Back Bay Update” forum. Grogan began by shedding some light on the origins of community foundations and their growth out of a changing American landscape at the beginning of the 20th century. “Community foundations were one of the many social innovations that occurred as American society tried to adjust to the urbanization of America,” Grogan said.



Meg Mainzer-Cohen, BBA President, and Paul Grogan, Boston Foundation President

is the need to reform the area’s failing schools.

“We can’t afford to carry this population,” he said, referring to the number of young people who will not be able to find gainful employment in the future given their lack of education. The Boston high school dropout is approaching 50% and the college graduation rate is a mere 35 percent.

“Many economists agree that the #1 factor in ensuring a strong local economy is the percentage of the local population that has a bachelors degree,” he said. “If we solve this problem (of low graduation rates), a host of seemingly intractable problems will melt away... The good news is that there *is* something we can do.” He pointed to evidence that students from charter schools perform better than their public school counterparts, and he applauded the announcement by the Mayor and Governor to double the number of charter schools in the area.



Dan Donahue, The Lenox Hotel, Gary Saunders, Saunders Hotel Group, and Susanne Hatje, Mandarin Oriental, Boston



Paul Grogan addresses the group

Since its inception in 1915, the Boston Foundation has supported the fundamental work of the city’s health and social welfare organizations. Traditionally, the foundation’s activities involve serving its 900 affiliated philanthropic funds totaling \$800 million, and providing early capital for start-up institutions. Under Grogan’s leadership, the Foundation has taken on an additional mission. He spoke of a need for “more vigorous, challenging conversation” among civic leaders, and the need to encourage a “rise to action” among community leaders.

To support and inform civic leaders in the region, the Boston Foundation recently released its Boston Indicators Project, a massive project that draws data from the wealth of information and research generated by metro Boston’s excellent public agencies, civic institutions, think tanks, and community based organizations. “The Boston Indicators Project is the first of its kind in the nation, and is being copied all over the country and even the world,” he said. The main goal of the project is “to influence public and private leaders to action within the community.” According to Grogan, the most pressing issue for contemporary Boston

The Foundation is also concerned with the lack of affordable housing and the state’s over-reliance on outside energy suppliers. Mr.



Meg Mainzer-Cohen welcomes BBA members to the meeting

Grogan added that Massachusetts should be proud to lead in healthcare reform, however that it could turn into a “slow suicide” if costs are not brought under control. “The problems we’re facing are imminently manageable,” he said. “We just need the resolve to solve them.”



The room was full of Back Bay business leaders

# The Best of Back Bay 2009

On November 10, 2009, the Back Bay Association hosted the annual Best of Back Bay celebration to showcase Back Bay's best restaurants, hotels and retail stores. Hundreds of Boston's business leaders and a number of public figures arrived to take part in the premier networking event of the year.

This year's event was held at the Four Seasons Hotel, Boston which was truly spectacular. Guests gathered in the main ballroom and enjoyed cocktails as they networked with some of the City's most influential professionals. The Four Seasons rolled out the red carpet (as usual) with an extraordinary array of edible delights including tuna tartar, escargot and a full oyster bar. To top it off, bartenders in every corner of the room served exotic fruit and liquor combinations.

There were 28 table sponsors who purchased a table for the event, which included a dinner for eight guests at one of the neighborhood's finest restaurants and a gift for each guest from local retailers. BBA Chairman, Bryan Koop, thanked the evening's sponsors and welcomed all to the event.



Women of the World give a spectacular performance



Amy Moody-McGrath and Meg Mainzer-Cohen announce the drawing results



Bill Taylor, GM of the Four Seasons Hotel, Boston, gives guests a warm welcome

In a surprise announcement, Meg

Mainzer-Cohen, BBA President, appeared on stage to reveal that the retail and restaurant drawing had taken place prior to the event and Amy Moody-McGrath, a partner with Goulston & Storrs, joined Meg on the stage to certify that the drawing was legitimate and free of outside influence.

In an exciting twist, the drawing results were followed by three brief performances from Berklee College of Music student groups. Women of The World, a group of 8 young women from different countries, lined up on stage and began a mostly a cappella performance of colorful vocal harmonies and pulsing rhythms from their band of hand drum players.

Next was The Berklee City Music All-Star Ensemble, a group composed of the best and brightest City Music students. Berklee City Music is the college's strategic initiative to engage underserved urban 4th- through 12th-graders in a year-round music education program designed to prepare them to pursue higher education. The last vocalist was Darcel Wilson, a faculty member at Berklee who gave a powerful performance of "Bridge Over Water".



Berklee College of Music students perform as guests make their exit to the Old Town Trolleys



Tom Stroik, Susanne Hatje, Edwina Kluender, and Sala Chnioui of the Mandarin Oriental, Boston

Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston transported guests, retail gifts in-hand, to their evening dinner locations.



Gary Saunders and guests



The staff of Fresco Flowers, who sponsored beautiful flower arrangements



Meg Mainzer-Cohen and Bernard Chiu (center) with his daughter and friend

## Back Bay Update with Congressman Michael Capuano



Tony Pangaro, Michael Capuano, Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Alexander Cooper, and Harron Ellenson

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009 the Back Bay Association hosted United States Congressman Mike Capuano as featured speaker for a “Back Bay Update” forum. Mr. Capuano represents the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Massachusetts, which includes 70% of Boston (including Back Bay), Somerville, Cambridge, and Chelsea.

The event was held at the Taj Boston Hotel in a gorgeous function space that boasts an outstanding view of the Back Bay’s Public Garden. Seeking to address common concerns of Boston’s business leaders, Mr. Capuano spoke about his experience as a member of the United



Michael Capuano, US Congressman, talks business with BBA guests

States House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. “One issue we have here in Massachusetts is that you can’t get from hotels to the Hynes Convention Center,” he said. He also mentioned the proposed Silver Line extension into South Station, but emphasized that it’s “probably not going to happen” due to the extremely high projected costs. A third issue he mentioned was the importance of maintaining the right of way of cars travelling through the Big Dig tunnels.

During the meeting Mr. Capuano also spoke candidly about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the bill enacted last year to provide a stimulus to the U.S. economy in the wake of the economic downturn. Asked what he



Ron Druker of the Druker Co. and Boston City Council President Mike Ross

would have changed about the bailout bill, he said, “I would have attached more strings to the money... I wanted more jobs... and more political understanding of what we did with the money.” The bailout money, he said, helped avoid the loss of service jobs such as teachers, firefighters, and street cleaners, but did not allocate enough money for transportation.

More recently, Mr. Capuano and fifteen of his colleagues from the House of Representatives wrote to Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) leader Kenneth Feinberg and Secretary of Treasury Timothy Geithner urging them to prohibit TARP recipients who still owe money to taxpayers from paying out big bonuses.



Bryan Koop, Chairman of the BBA and Mr. Capuano

## BBA Board Meets with Senator Sonya Chang-Diaz



On December 9, 2009 State Senator Sonya Chang-Diaz joined the BBA Board of Directors for a meeting. As she concluded her first term as state senator, Ms. Chang-Diaz described how difficult 2009 was for the city government as well as business during the economic downturn. She called it a “defensive” year for government.

As a state senator, Ms. Chang-Diaz said she is focused on economic justice for Boston’s poorer populations, education policy, CORI reform, and gun control. During the recession, however, infrastructure has been the main focus lately in City Hall, “which supports everything else,” she said. We look forward to working with her in the future.

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