

New Bedford should change its name from 'Whaling City' to 'No Bail City'

New Bedford judges have been on a "no bail" roll in the past week.

On Friday, Jan. 4, 37-year-old Elizabeth Pina was arrested for seven outstanding warrants. Clearly, she is someone who doesn't care much about authority or court decisions. She was released by the judge anyway. A few days later, on Jan 8, she was arrested for shoplifting, allegedly stealing \$125 worth of items from Rite-Aid Pharmacy on 824 Purchase St. Yet again, she was released by the judge without bail despite a request by the assistant district attorney that she be held on the three open charges. Here's someone with a long history of failing to show for court, with 18 defaults on her record, released by the judge.

23-year old Adrian Lablue, a homeless man, **allegedly broke into four businesses between Dec. 18 and Jan. 5**, but was released by the judge. Within hours of being released without bail by Judge Edward Sharkansky, New Bedford police report that the suspect broke into yet another business on Jan. 7.

But wait, it gets better.

On Jan. 2, New Bedford District Court Judge James McGovern **found 26-year old Catherine Murphy to be a danger to public safety after her involvement in a violent kidnapping** but released her anyway with an ankle bracelet and some conditions (don't go to Wareham and avoid the victim). She is accused of helping to kidnap, beat and tie up someone for a \$180 drug debt in New Bedford. The judge found her to be dangerous and knowing her partner in crime was still at large, released her with an ankle bracelet.

This is just a sample of the ridiculous no bail cases in 2019. New Bedford should change its name from 'The Whaling City' to 'The No Bail City' – we don't hunt whales anymore, but we sure do allow criminals to walk free to victimize society over and over.

New Bedford City Council to review zoning for cannabis this Thursday

The New Bedford City Council will address a motion from New Bedford's last Committee on Licensing and Zoning to review the current zoning for cannabis in New Bedford. **Three businesses trying to open a recreational marijuana facility in New Bedford** have complained that the zoning has been a major barrier.

REPORT, Committee on Licensing and Zoning for Cannabis, recommending to the City Council that the Host Agreement Committee, appointed by the Administration, review the current Cannabis Zoning Ordinance to see if they are able to identify any zoning and/or other issues that may affect the marijuana business application process and that they report their findings to the Committee on Ordinances. (To be Referred to the Committee on Ordinances.)

01.10.2019_REPORT_-_HOST_AGREEMENT_COMMITTEE_-_REVIEW_CANNABIS_ORDINANCE

OPINION: Stop Cumberland Farms from building on busy part of Acushnet Ave

The following was submitted to New Bedford Guide by a concerned resident:

“North [End] Residents, Business Owners and Employees in Far North End, Voc Tech Faculty, Staff, Travelers, & Any Concerned Citizens:

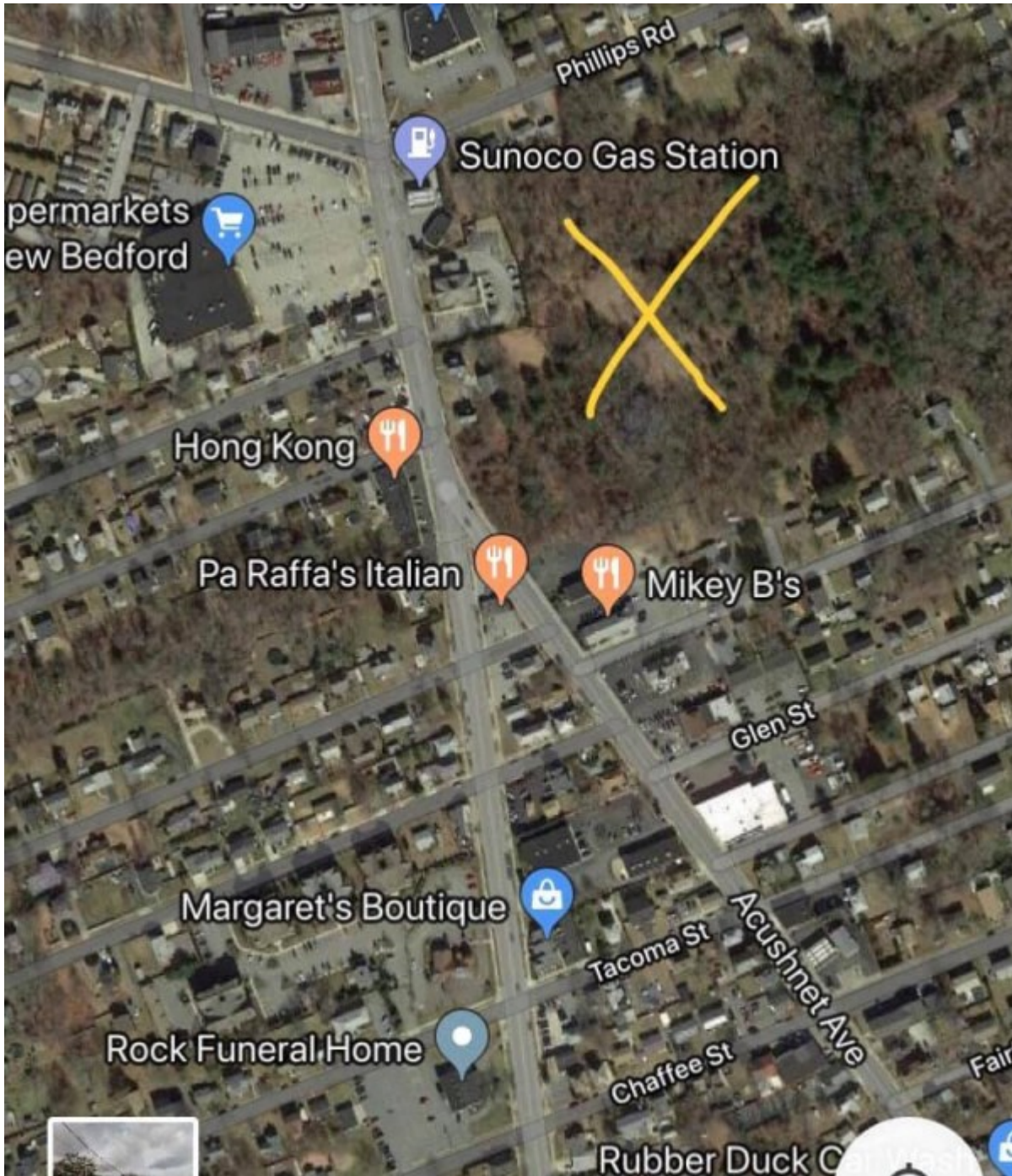
Your Presence and Support is Needed Wed. night, Jan. 9th at 6 PM, Downtown Library, 3rd Floor

The New Bedford Planning Board will decide to approve or disapprove a new LARGE Cumberland Farms, to include a gas station AND a car wash. The proposed location is directly at the Acushnet Ave curve lights (adjacent to Orthodontics and across from Pa Raffa’s – and close to the Rte. 140 gateway into the north end).

This meeting is a continuation from a December meeting where the developers shared their plan. Cumberland Farms hired a traffic review, who did a traffic safety analysis for ONE day, on a Tuesday, to determine if it would be safe to add a Cumby’s in that location. ONE DAY, plus, they only used Mass DOT accident info to tell the Planning Board “only 15 accidents at that location in x number of years. Councilor LINDA Morad then spoke sharing New Bedford Police accident data indicating over 100 accidents PLUS a FATALITY.

PLEASE ATTEND on Wed., Jan. 9th at 6 PM to show your OPPOSITION to having a large Cumberland Farms with gas station

and car wash at a dangerous traffic location (plus, there are currently 4 gas stations near there, a car wash a few blocks away and a grocery store. Is Cumby's needed there? NO!).” – Jacqueline Coucci



New Bedford Fire Department awarded \$13,586 in SAFE grants

The New Bedford Fire Department was awarded \$13,586 in grants; \$10,386 for the S.A.F.E. program and \$3,200 in Senior SAFE funds.

The Baker-Polito Administration announced that 246 fire departments have been awarded public fire education grants. Two hundred-forty five fire departments will receive Student Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) Program grants to work with classroom teachers to deliver fire and life safety lessons. Of these, 240 fire departments will also receive a Senior SAFE Program grant to work with older adults on fire and life safety. One community will receive a Senior SAFE grant only.

“The S.A.F.E. Program has been instrumental in educating the next generation of fire safe children for 24 years,” said Governor Baker, “The program is a great example of state and local governments collaborating with teachers to provide fire safety education to young people.” The average number of children dying in fires annually has dropped by 74% since the S.A.F.E. Program began.

“In its 5th year, the Senior SAFE Program is supporting fire educators who deliver fire safety education to seniors who are most at risk of dying in fires in Massachusetts,” said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. “Firefighters use these funds to take opportunities to visit older adults in their homes and provide safety education and strategies on how to survive a fire,” she added. Fire departments partner with local senior service agencies.

State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey said, “The S.A.F.E. and

Senior SAFE programs are having a great impact on the fire and life safety of our most vulnerable populations – children and elders.” He added, “The fire departments being supported in these public education efforts are increasing the safety of the people in their communities.”

The S.A.F.E. Program provides \$1.2M through the Executive Office of the Public Safety and Security to local fire departments. The Senior SAFE Program provides \$600,000 in grant funds from fees paid by tobacco companies to the Fire Standard Compliant Cigarette Program to ensure their products meet the fire safety requirements to be sold in Massachusetts. The programs are administered by the state Department of Fire Services.

Pope’s Island – good enough for a strip club, but not retail marijuana sales?

Whisk & JANE LLC is one of at least three businesses that have started the process of opening a recreational marijuana facility in New Bedford. They are hoping to open their business at the former Temptations strip club at 161 Popes Island in New Bedford, but have hit some significant roadblocks put up by the City of New Bedford.



The main barrier? The **City of New Bedford's zoning ordinance** that significantly limits where marijuana facilities can be opened. In the case of Whisk & JANE, 161 Popes Island is too close to the Prince Henry the Navigator Monument and the park that surrounds it.

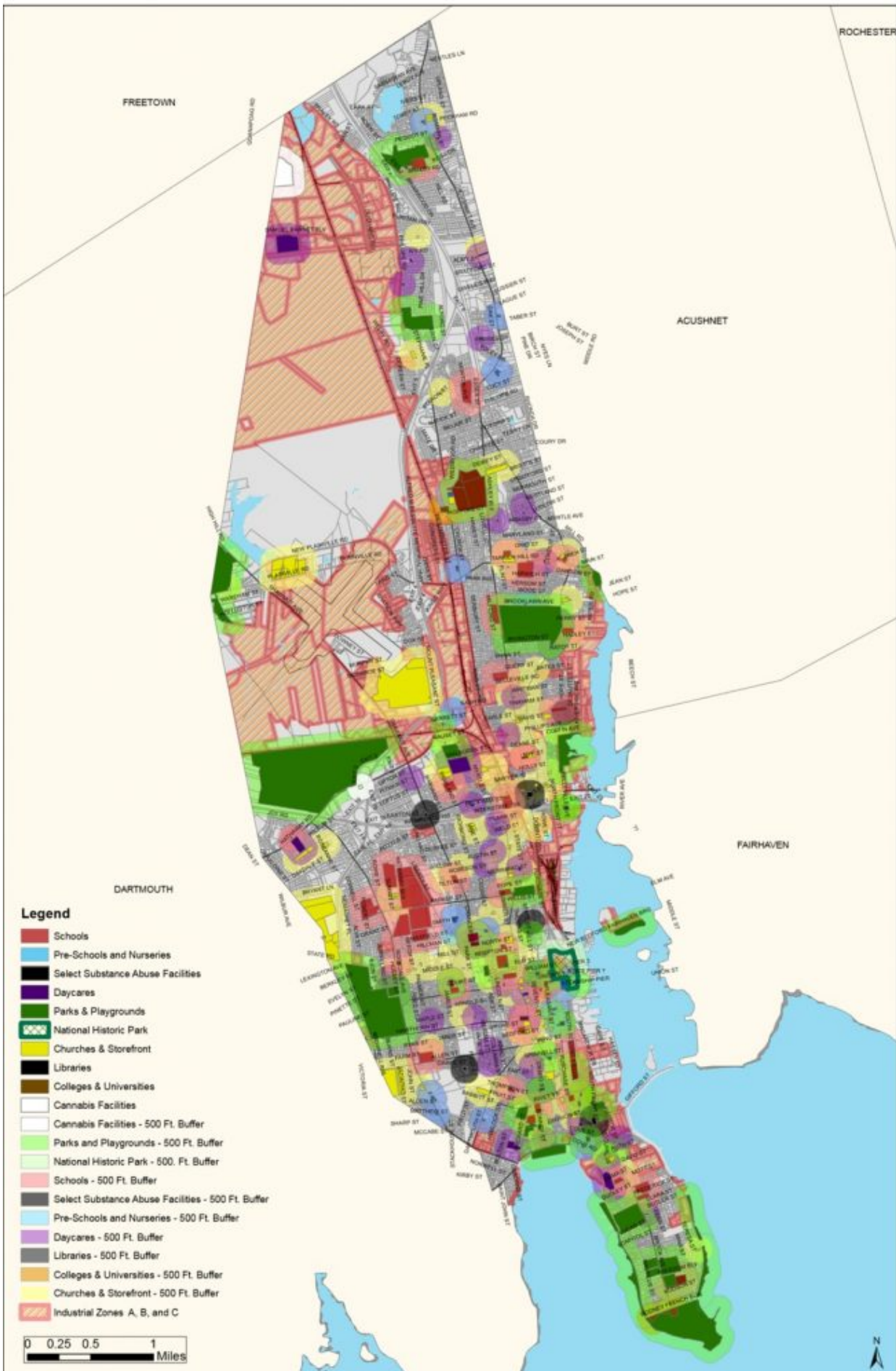


Here's Ericca Kennedy of Whisk & JANE LLC detailing her frustration in front of the New Bedford Cannabis Committee

last month. You can read her letters to the City Council and Mayor **here**.

Recently, **three businesses are applying to open a recreational marijuana business in New Bedford** and all three have mentioned that the City of New Bedford has “blacked out” New Bedford to recreational marijuana. If you look at the zoning map, they have a point – the white area is where marijuana facilities may apply to open (based on the map legend).

Map 5: Proposed 500 Ft. Buffers and Industrial Zones A, B, and C



The obvious question is, if the building at 161 Popes Island is good enough for a strip club, why isn't it good enough for a recreational marijuana business? Another obvious question is, why are elected officials in New Bedford so determined to keep recreational marijuana out of the city? Four recreational marijuana shops have already opened in Massachusetts, one not too far in Wareham:

Fall River will be opening a recreational marijuana store any day now yet New Bedford seems at least months away. New Bedford elected officials seem to be taking a cautious approach due to the fact that marijuana sales are still banned at the federal level, but clearly other cities and towns have figured out how to get recreational marijuana sales started. With 2019 being an election year, I'm sure they'll figure it out before October when the primary season begins.

OPINION: New Bedford resident has mixed view on Uber/Lyft restrictions

UPDATE: this has been fact checked and Uber and Lyft do NOT face any new restrictions in 2019. Details [here](#).

A New Bedford resident is looking for other opinions on "Uber and Lyft activity in New Bedford will be illegal" unless you have a license from the City of New Bedford starting January 1st, 2019:

"Hi all, looking for opinions.

Apparently, starting January 1 ANY AND ALL Uber and Lyft

activity in New Bedford will be illegal. In fact, any livery operator (regardless of where the business is located) will be illegal in New Bedford unless they have been granted a license by the city of New Bedford.

This means as a resident of New Bedford you can only utilize a New Bedford certified livery company.

I see good and bad points but curious what everyone thinks.” – Noel Ciminello

Whisk & JANE LLC send demand letters to New Bedford City Council and Mayor

Ericca Kennedy of Whisk & JANE LLC has sent letters to the New Bedford City Council and Mayor John Mitchell voicing her frustration that the zoning ordinance has caused a significant delay to opening her recreational marijuana business at the former strip club on Pope’s Island.

Here are the letters:

Final Demand Immediate Action Required

Immediate HCA Action Required

Massachusetts lawmakers get 6% pay hike in 2019

Starting Jan 1, 2019, the base pay for Massachusetts lawmakers will increase by nearly 6 percent – increasing their base salary from \$62,547 to \$66,256. Lawmakers also get leadership pay and office pay that increases their base pay an additional \$22,000 at the minimum and up to an extra \$100,000 for the Senate President.

Locally, in 2017 State Senator Mark Montigny earned \$65,000 in leadership pay and \$20,000 in office expenses and that likely hasn't decreased as he is listed as the Chairperson on the Joint Committee on Rules, the Chairperson on the Senate Committee on Rules and the Vice Chair on the Joint Committee on Export Development on his **State Senate page**. That would bring his total takehome pay to \$151,256 up from \$82,233 in 2016 and 147,548 in 2017.

In 2017, **Massachusetts legislators significantly increased leadership pay raises and office expenses** – circumventing the State constitution. In 1998, 60% of Massachusetts voters that went to the polls voted to “prohibit state legislators from changing their base pay and instead would adjust that pay according to changes in median household income.” Voters changed the constitution to restrict base pay, but not total compensation. In response, legislators gave themselves significant stipend raises.

Whisk & JANE at the New Bedford Cannabis Committee

Three businesses are trying to open a retail marijuana business in New Bedford, but all are facing obstacles mostly due to the zoning and rules implemented by the City. Whisk & JANE detailed their frustration at last week's Licensing and Zoning for Cannabis Committee.

Details on each of the three businesses:
<https://www.newbedfordguide.com/three-see-to-open-retail-marijuana-businesses-in-new-bedford/2018/12/11>

Zoning rules:
<https://www.newbedfordguide.com/proposed-recreational-marijuana-ordinance-for-licensing-and-zoning-in-new-bedford/2018/06/14>

City Guidance:
<https://www.newbedfordguide.com/new-bedford-issues-guidance-regarding-establishment-of-recreational-marijuana-facilities/2018/10/09>

Full Cannabis Committee meeting:
<https://www.facebook.com/NewBedfordGuide/videos/736863030022549/>

SoCo Green at the New Bedford Cannabis Committee

Three businesses are trying to open a retail marijuana business in New Bedford, but all are facing obstacles mostly due to the zoning and rules implemented by the City. SoCo

Green detailed their frustration at last week's Licensing and Zoning for Cannabis Committee.

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