



The Sapphire Anniversary

Boston Edison HOLIDAY HOME TOUR

45TH ANNUAL | DECEMBER 15, 2019

DECEMBER 2019

Dates to Remember:

DECEMBER 13
Sapphire Anniversary Gala

DECEMBER 14
Voices Rising Over
Boston-Edison

DECEMBER 15
45th Holiday Home Tour

Visit historicbostonedison.org
for additional event details!

45th Annual Holiday Home Tour

The Historic Boston-Edison Association is proud to announce the 45th Anniversary of our Holiday Home Tours. To mark this milestone occasion, Boston-Edison will have three days of holiday events during the weekend of December 13 - 15.

December 13: The Sapphire Affair Anniversary Gala

Our holiday weekend of events begins with a night to remember! The Sapphire Affair Anniversary Gala is Friday, December 13, and includes valet parking, a progressive dinner and drinks with live music through two amazing Boston-Edison homes. We will end the night with dessert and dancing (and more live music!) at a very special third "surprise" location! There will be shuttles between all of the sites; no walking is required. Cocktail attire, please. Tickets are limited (advance sale only) and are \$200 for the Friday Gala only (these tickets are only available for purchase until noon December 13, if not sold out before). For a special rate of \$240, guests can attend both Gala and the Sunday Holiday Home Tour.

December 14: Voices Rising Over Boston-Edison

On Saturday, December 14, we present "A Holiday Serenade: Voices Rising Over Boston-Edison." Families from the Boston-Edison neighborhood and beyond are invited to spend an evening rehearsing at the Motown Mansion (918 W. Boston Blvd.) and singing songs at various homes around the Boston-Edison neighborhood from 4 pm to 8 pm. The evening will culminate with a party at the iconic Motown Mansion pool house from 8 pm to 9 pm. This is a FREE event, but capacity is limited and pre-registration is required.

December 15: The 45th Annual Boston-Edison Holiday Home Tour

The tour features five historically significant homes, decorated for the holiday season. Visitors see the fine exterior and interior residential architecture of the early 1900s. Four of this year's homes have never before been on tour. Sunday's tour is a combination walking and bus tour (walking is minimal). Tours begin at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary, located at the corner of Linwood Avenue and Chicago Boulevard in Detroit. Buses leave every 20 minutes from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. The tour generally lasts about two hours. Following the tour, complimentary refreshments are served at the Seminary. Guests receive a commemorative program with histories and photographs of the five homes. Please note: tickets for the home tour quickly SOLD OUT within hours of becoming available on November 15th!

We are looking forward to a spectacular weekend of holiday events!



Dianne Bostic Robinson
HBEA President

Mission Statement

The mission of the Historic Boston-Edison Association is to protect the historic character and values of our homes by:

- Offering programs that support safety and community beautification;
- Hosting events that encourage a greater community bond among neighbors; and,
- Promoting culture and civic engagement for residents that live within the District and beyond.

Vision Statement

Our vision for the Boston-Edison District is that it remain a historic community that is beautiful, inclusive, and safe for neighbors and visitors.

Respect and Respectful Dissent

"When people work together, the differences can lead to both conflict and cooperation. Great teams know that collaboration is not only about working together and learning from each other. It's about always being hungry for new ideas and finding joy in hearing people that have different opinions and attitudes." - Anonymous

The Boston-Edison Historic District is a neighborhood. We are all neighbors living on West Boston Boulevard, Chicago Boulevard, Longfellow Avenue and Edison Avenue in one of the largest historic neighborhoods encompassing over 900 homes. We are diverse. We are neighbors and neighborly. Words to describe neighborly are "cordial, amiable, harmonious, hospitable, considerate, sociable, gracious, civil, companionable, cooperative, genial, gregarious, helpful, kind, obliging, social, well-disposed."

In Dominic Price's article on leadership, "Great Minds Don't Always Think Alike" he describes how to build respectful dissent. The principles he described are appropriate not just for leaders, but for all to strive toward. "Because it's through conversation, debate, and yes, even argument, that real ideas come out and better decisions are made. Yes, there's no doubt that creative conflict isn't always, well, comfortable. And it may lead to tense moments or feelings getting bruised. But the payoff is quality."

He describes eight ways to develop a culture that values respectful dissent. These principles are applicable in situations where there is disagreement or differing opinions. In summary he states:

1. **Argue like you're right and listen like you're wrong:** another way to put this: more elephant (big ears) and less hippo (big mouth).
2. **To solve complex problems you need cognitive diversity:** better ideas come from diverse perspectives.
3. **Different opinions aren't a tax, they're an investment:** this mindset results in improved ideas.
4. **Leave smarter:** never leave a meeting knowing what you knew going in.
5. **Be a role model:** lead by example.
6. **It's not about you (or, the continued chronicles of getting over yourself):** Your focus should always be on solving the problem and not simply defending your idea or stance or viewpoint.
7. **Roles and responsibilities matter:** Even though divergent voices and opinions deserve respect, it's very important to be clear about certain roles and responsibilities.
8. **Clean it up, have a retro:** If you've tussled with a teammate about a project or problem or design or headline, talk about it when tempers, emotions and feelings have calmed."

As neighbors, sometimes we have tough decisions to make. Just as we do in other areas of our lives, such as at work or at home, it is important how we seek resolution when we disagree.

Our association values diverse thoughts and opinions. The more ideas the better and the more the neighborhood benefits. There is always an open invitation for you to share your ideas. Join a committee or volunteer to work on a project. Or, you can call a board member and share your thoughts. Contact information can be found on the last page of this newsletter or call me at (313) 477-0264 and I will help direct you to the proper person.

Thank you, neighbors, for choosing the Boston-Edison neighborhood to live, work and play, helping to ensure that we meet our mission and vision.

Your Servant Leader,

Dianne Bostic Robinson
HBEA President

HBEA COMMITTEE NEWS

Membership

We work together...We celebrate and fellowship together.

On September 7, the Chicago East and Longfellow (between Woodward and Second) Block Clubs mobilized forces to transform their shared alley into a clean, usable space.

The mobilization began at 10 a.m. by committed neighbors lead by Katherine Allen and Travis Yarrington. Even 6-year-old Jayden Pickett was up for the challenge of participating in community service.

"Hops in the Alley 3": Dally in the Alley - HBEA Style!

The transformation was over the top thanks to Carl Hollier's special decorations. A stage, high-top tables, DJ equipment and professional lights elevated Hops in the Alley to another level. Kudos to our gracious hosts, Frank Kong and Colin Knapp who once again provided their awesome hospitality with James Merkison on the grill.

Security & Zoning

Your HBEA Security/Zoning Committee is helping block clubs within the HBEA District with assistance on cleaning up your alleys. Our goal is to make every alley within our district safe and clean.

Many have noticed the city of Detroit installed several speed humps along Edison Avenue in Zone A (between Woodward Avenue and the Lodge). Is this something that neighbors would like to see more (or less of)? Please let us know. Either way we seek to understand more of how neighbors are feeling about such changes.

Please contact Pierre Haden at phaden@historicbostonedison.org with questions or for more information. Help us help you!



New Speed Humps installed along Edison Avenue in Zone A

MEMBERSHIP EVENTS



Movie in the Park



Picnic in the Park



Oktoberfest

Branding Efforts

Signage for Boston-Edison found along Woodward Avenue and Linwood Blvd.



Public Relations

In 2019 the Public Relations (PR) committee has helped to support the activities of the Boston-Edison district's association, block clubs and neighbors. We've regularly supported the Attic Sale, Home Tour, Motor City Makeover and ongoing events throughout the year to help get the information into your hands.

Whether it be through the newsletter you're reading right now, our regular email updates (if you are not receiving please let us know!), the historicbostonedison.org website, signs, flyers or mailers, we work to keep you up-to-date on what's happening within the district and what the HBEA is hard at work on.

The PR committee is also responsible for managing the district's archives and developing merchandise such as T-shirts, sweatshirts and tote bags.

In 2020 we'll continue this work of informing residents of timely information as well as diving into more content related to the history of the district, our homes and our neighbors.

We are currently seeking writers, editors or any extra hands to help manage our email communication efforts in the new year! If you have experience in these areas we want to hear from you! Please contact pr@historicbostonedison.org with more information on your area of interest.

Developing a new brand for the Historic Boston-Edison District and Association

The Historic Boston-Edison Association is looking at re-branding the District and the Association.

The Association envisions using an expert panel of Boston-Edison dues-paying members who have experience in branding campaigns to steer the process and serve on an ad hoc committee to assure high-quality, transparent and objective work is accomplished. The committee would be responsible for recommending a consultant(s) to the Historic Boston-Edison Association Board of Directors.

This professional visual identity consultant would be responsible for providing high-quality work in a timely fashion AND embracing a robust and independent input process that involves the residents and key stakeholders.

Boston-Edison is a brand and strong brands benefit from strong, consistent, recognizable visual identities. The Boston-Edison neighborhood in Detroit, Michigan, is a place of rich history, character and camaraderie. Effective use of the visual identity should help foster community, raise awareness of the neighborhood and evoke positive feelings for residents, the larger Southeastern Michigan region and beyond.

If you wish to be appointed to this ad hoc committee please email or call Dianne Bostic Robinson, at dbrobinson@historicbostonedison.org or call (313) 477-0264.

SEASONS OF B-E SIGNS

*Thanks to the HBEA
Beautification Committee*



*Spring can't come
soon enough!*

Beautification

The Beautification Committee members are so excited to serve you and our community. We are ecstatic to be a part of a vibrant Association and we invite all to join us and take part in the fun as we tackle neighborhood initiatives. A few achievements to date include:

- HBEA banners placed on the historic light poles along Linwood and Woodward Ave.
- Successful participation in supporting block clubs and neighbors in MotorCity Makeover in cleaning the alleys.
- Doggy waste stations installed at Voigt Park. Hired two neighborhood youth to maintain the waste stations.
- Hiring a contractor to plant and maintain the beds around the Boston Edison entry sign. Seasonal flowers planted around the signs twice a year. Seasonal flowers planted around the HBEA entry signs.
- Had holiday decorations for many HBEA historic light poles and entry signs installed. Engaged neighbors to help prepare for the installation.
- Thousands of daffodil bulbs planted by the city of Detroit on all of the medians on W. Boston Blvd., Chicago Blvd., and at Voigt Park.
- Conversations with Wayne County Commissioner Jewel Ware and the city of Detroit representatives to possibly secure \$25,000 for Voigt Park initiatives.
- Conversations with City officials to discuss possible enhancements for Voigt Park.
- Held two stakeholder meetings to hear from the residents about how to spend the \$25,000 and garner ideas about possible future enhancements in Voigt Park

The committee greatly appreciates the outpouring of community feedback and please know there are more conversations to come!

Future discussions include improvements to the existing Chicago Blvd freeway overpass and replacement of our historic signs. We welcome all to join in on our community efforts whether large or small. We need your help and look forward to continuing to serve our neighborhood and community.

New Ad Hoc Committee Formed

A recommendation was made to the HBEA President by the Beautification Committee to form a Beautification Committee Voigt Park Ad Hoc Committee. The purpose of the ad hoc committee is to send a recommendation to the Beautification Committee for discussion on a long-term enhancement and maintenance plan for Voigt Park. The committee's duration would be six months and it would include five residents from around Voigt Park and four residents from the broader neighborhood.

Included in the recommendation was a committee composed of Voigt Park residents Lydia Rae Levinson, Jim Hamilton, John Olumba, Bertha Byrd, and Mary Wright; and non-Voigt Park residents Patricia Pickett, Jon Saunders, Pierre Haden and Kaleena Quinn. Lydia Rae Levinson and Jon Saunders serve as co-chairs.

The recommendation for the ad hoc committee, its purpose and appointed members has been approved by the HBEA Board. Following Beautification Committee review, the HBEA board which will conduct final discussion and make a recommendation for implementation to Detroit officials. Plans for Voigt Park will receive continued community input.

WE NEED YOU... TO WRITE FOR US!

Do you like the articles you are reading in this newsletter? Well they don't write themselves!

The Public Relations committee is looking for folks who like to write and have some neighborhood stories to tell.

If you are interested in being a writer for future issues of the HBEA newsletter, please send us an email letting us know you would like to help!

PR@historicbostonedison.org

Decision Makers: Who do we know and who can best help Boston-Edison meet its mission and vision?

Connections are an important element for any individual and/or organizations to be successful. We are developing a list of our connections.

If you are a decision maker, let us know. If you are an elected official, past elected official, work or volunteer for the State, County or City in any capacity, or have a relative and/or close friend in these areas, please let us know by sending an email to Dianne at dbrobinson@historicbostonedison.org.

We have great connections with our House of Representative member, Wayne County Commission Representative, the Mayor's Office, Council Member, District and Assistant District Managers, our Neighborhood Police Officers, Detroit Historic Commission, the Historic Designation Advisory Board, and more. Still, as an Association we do not know all of our other specific connections within these groups, and with other decision makers that can help us meet our mission and vision.

Special Assessment District (SAD) Committee

A Special Assessment District (SAD) Ad Hoc Committee has been established by the Boston-Edison Association Board of Directors and given the task to ensure that every property owner within the district can make an informed decision and vote regarding the special assessment.

What is the issue? A survey will be conducted to assess the desire to become or not become a Special Assessment District.

What is a Special Assessment District? It is a Special Assessment for snow removal, mosquito abatement, and security services. Residents can vote to be designated as such for an additional tax added to the property owners summer property tax bill. (City Ordinance 07-14 Chapter 18, Article 12 of the 1984 Detroit City Code, Division 7).

What is the Ad Hoc Committee charged to accomplish? The task is to create a plan to survey the property owners within the Boston-Edison District to assess the level of interest in applying to become a Special Assessment District, commonly referred to as a SAD.

Prior to the survey the Ad Hoc Committee:

- The main goal is to ensure that all homeowners will have an opportunity to make an informed decision and vote.
- To ensure that the process to obtain the results of the survey is transparent and understandable.
- Provide education packets to all homeowners on what a Special Assessment District is and how it may impact their quality of life and pocketbooks in order to make a decision based on their needs and circumstances.
- Inform homeowners that the Boston-Edison District has an opportunity to petition to become a Special Assessment District.
- This can only be accomplished if every homeowner is involved and participates according to their needs and the voting process.

The Ad Hoc Committee is also in need of 10 Volunteers!

Interested residents, please contact Debora Copeland, Chairperson, at dcopeland@historicbostonedison.org

Fences in Historical Districts

Recently, the Detroit Historic District Commission (HDC) amended its fence guidelines to promote greater historical integrity for fencing in Detroit historic districts. In particular, the Commission has removed both vinyl fences and unfinished wood fences from the guidelines.

Here's why.

Fences are an element in the architectural design of an historic property. The general rule is that fences should fit with the historic character of properties. A fence that has design, material, location, and color that complement a historic property maintains the integrity of that property and contributes to its architecture. Fences also can diminish a property, if the design, materials, location, and color of a fence are not consistent with its historic design.

Since fences are part of the character of historic properties, any changes to fences or installation of new fences must be approved by the HDC before work begins. See below.

In the past, the Commission has allowed vinyl and unpainted wood fences, but they have not proven to be historically appropriate. First, the HDC did allow vinyl fences that were supposed to look like wood or metal. However, in the Commission's experience, vinyl fences never look like painted wood or metal. They look like vinyl. And vinyl is not a historic material. Second, historic fences were painted or stained. Now the guidelines say that a wood fence should be painted or stained a color appropriate to the historic property.

Where historic fences exist, the preservation principle is that they should be maintained, repaired and restored as historic elements of the property, just like any other historic element. The fence should not be removed.

The more distinctive is the fence, the greater is its importance in the overall architectural design, and the greater is the importance of maintaining and retaining the fence. Brick or cast-iron fences are prime examples. The same principle applies for historic hedges.

When new fences are proposed, the Commission considers several factors in deciding if they are historically appropriate for properties. Here are the general principles.

The location of the fence must not disrupt the streetscape. For that reason, fences are not allowed forward of the front façade of a house. There is one exception for corner lots. Design and materials must be historically appropriate. Many types of wood, masonry, and metal fences are allowed.

The design must be one that has historic precedent. The one prohibition is that stockade fences are not allowed. Where these are seen, they may pre-date the guidelines, or they may be unapproved (violations). For hedges, a variety of plant materials are appropriate.

Examples of Historical Fencing



Detroit Historical
District Commission
(HDC) Email:
hdc@detroitmi.gov

Fences in Historical Districts Cont...

Fence height is limited to 6 feet. The exception is that fences may be 8 feet tall along the alley side of a property. For corner lot exceptions, the limit is 3 feet.

The color of fences must be compatible with the property. What color is appropriate for a property is governed by its architectural style. For example, prairie style houses have natural colors. A white fence would not be appropriate.

The process of getting approval from HDC for new or altered fences or hedges begins with submitting a Project Review Request to hdc@detroitmi.gov.

HDC staff was wide latitude within the HDC guidelines to approve new fences or changes to fences. All locations, materials, designs, and colors must be approved. HDC staff will offer advice to modify an application so that staff can approve it. If a proposal falls outside the guidelines and staff cannot approve it, then the proposal must go to the Commission for a formal hearing.

The Commission occasionally has ordered the removal of new fences when they had not been approved and were not historically appropriate. To avoid such a costly problem, please follow the approval process before signing contracts and installation.

James L. Hamilton, Chair -

Detroit Historic District Commission | Past-President HBEA 313-865-6306

Boston-Edison Leaders attend "Forum on the Future"

On October 30, several leaders of the Historic Boston-Edison Association attended the Forum on the Future at the Detroit Athletic Club. The topic addressed "sustainable recovery in Detroit and why a thoughtful approach to community engagement and inclusivity is key."



From left: Raymond Landsberg, HBEA Treasurer; Ekundayo Ojumu, HBEA Board Member; Cassi Meiti, President, Wood Roses Block Club; Dianne Bostic Robinson, President HBEA; Byron Osborn, President 1400-1500 Block Club. Also in attendance (not pictured) is Patricia Pickett, HBEA 2nd Vice President.

FALL HITS B-E!

Photos by Eleanor Oakes



FALL HITS B-E!

Photos by Eleanor Oakes



BLOCK CLUB BUZZ

Chicago Lodgers Block Club

The Chicago Lodgers Block Club continued its tradition of hosting a Halloween Party for block club members and their children and grandchildren, and also for other Boston-Edison families.

Chicago Lodgers love to entertain, eat and enjoy being with each other.

A delicious Halloween dinner included worms and eyeballs (better known as spaghetti and meatballs) cow dung (hamburgers) devil's punch, etc. Dinner also included chili, salad, drinks for the youth and stronger beverages for the adults.

Neighbors brought candy if they were not handing out candy in their block or had little traffic. Those parents had their little ones handing out candy and rotated with the adults in ensuring every person received a treat. Goody bags were given out too.

A fun time was had by all. Join us next year if you would like. Our next event will be the Annual Block Club Holiday Brunch.

Chicago Lodgers Block Club,
Dianne Bostic Robinson, President
Deniera Davis, Vice President
Fred Hill, Treasurer
Kristina Economy, Secretary

1400-1500 Edison Block Club

The 1400-1500 Edison Block is growing. We welcome our new neighbors who have hit the ground running by engaging in our meetings (third Saturday at 3 p.m.) contributing to our annual block party, and helping with neighborhood beautification. Speaking of which, our corner flower planters have been a huge success all summer. Thank you to our corner houses for taking time to water and weed the flowers.

We have set goals for next year and are truly thankful for how far we've come together. Projects for the Spring include outreach to Detroit Public Works, investigation of cracked sidewalks for repair and fixing of sinkholes found on both the north and south alleyways.

We are currently preparing for our Christmas dinner which brings holiday joy and community to all who come out. This will take place on December 15. We appreciate the support from other blocks and are looking to engage with our neighbors to build our community.

Our meetings have been attended by city and county representatives; and we are going to leverage the interest of these elected officials in ways that will improve our sidewalks, tree lines, street safety, and families. We have a committed core of neighbors who are the heart that pumps life into our corner of Boston-Edison.

Neighbor News

Zaundra Wimberly Appointed to Deputy Director of DDOT

Congratulations to Zaundra Wimberly on her appointment as the new City of Detroit Deputy Director of the Department of Transportation. Zaundra, along with her husband Kerwin (who also works for the City as a Senior Policy Analyst) and their five children, moved to their home on West Boston Blvd. in 2018.



Dr. Akosua Barthwell Evans builds bridge between Boston-Edison and Yale Alumni Association Board of Governors

Longtime Boston-Edison resident, Dr. Akosua Barthwell Evans, was appointed to the Yale Alumni Association's Board of Governors three years ago (one of two Yale alums appointed to the Board of Governors at the time). She continues to build relationships between Yale Alums and the West Boston Blvd. Block Club Association (WBBBCA) and the HBEA. Last year, she organized a collaboration between Yale Alums and the WBBBCA to help plant and clean up the medians on West Boston Blvd. between 14th and Rosa Parks. This was the first time that the Yale Day of Service had been held in Detroit.

This year she again organized a collaboration among Yale alums, the WBBBCA and the City of Detroit during Motor City Makeover. As a result, more than 3,600 beautiful red begonias have been planted on the blocks of West Boston Blvd. between LaSalle and Linwood and 14th and Rosa Parks. About 40 volunteers participates.

Akosua also chairs the Yale Club of Michigan Task Force, charged with revitalizing the Yale Club of Michigan. Akosua's parents bought her home on West Boston Blvd. in 1950.

Congratulations!

- **Jesus Madrigal and Melanie Parker** were married on October 19, 2019 in Detroit at St. Anne's Catholic Church. They've lived at 1717 W. Boston Blvd. since February 2018.

Next Big Steps

- Congratulations to **Greg Sikora Mowers** of W. Boston Blvd. for being accepted into the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program with the Wayne State University College of Education. Greg started coursework this past August.

NEIGHBOR NEWS

Gone But Not Forgotten

- **Gary Garrett & Thomas Peloso** | It is incredibly sad to announce that both Gary Garrett and Tom Peloso, of W. Boston Blvd., passed just weeks apart from each other. The two had lived in their home together for over 50 years. Tom worked at the Civil Rights Commission in Detroit and was a master locksmith. He was also a past president of HBEA.
Gary worked at nonprofits and then taught at the University of Detroit, Wayne State University, and St. Clair County Community College. He was incredibly proud of his backyard which he lovingly called his “urban garden.” Both will be dearly missed.
- **Frank McBride** | Chicago Boulevard and Boston-Edison has lost a legend. Frank McBride, who lived in the neighborhood over 50 years, passed away peacefully with neighbor Kevin Pihod at his bedside. Long time neighbors will remember seeing Frank running through the neighborhood.
An avid runner and Olympic track coach, Frank would traverse our streets in his running duds and walked with his many dogs picking up trash as he went. He taught philosophy at Wayne State University for many years. Frank and his late wife Angela were very active in the Historic Boston-Edison Association.

News to share?

Has a baby been born?
Did you get engaged
or married?

Did you just move in and
want to introduce yourself?

Did you or a family
member do something
awesome?

LET US KNOW!

We're looking for news
from you to share with
your neighbors!

Send an email to
newsletter@historicbostonedison.org

Historic Boston-Edison Association Board of Directors | 2019-2020 Directory

Zone A | Woodward-Hamilton

Edison Street

Vacant
info@historicbostonedison.org

Longfellow Street

Patricia Pickett 313-715-8521
ppickett@historicbostonedison.org

Chicago Boulevard

Vacant
info@historicbostonedison.org

W. Boston Boulevard

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At-Large

Ekundayo Ojumu 215-760-8269
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Zone B | Hamilton-Rosa Parks (12th)

Edison Street

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Longfellow Street

Vacant
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Chicago Boulevard

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W. Boston Boulevard

Erik Hill 248-884-8078
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At-Large

Deniera Davis 313-595-5551
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Zone C | Rosa Parks (12th)-Linwood

Edison Street

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Longfellow Street

Gregory Montgomery
gmontgomery@historicbostonedison.org

Chicago Boulevard

Pierre Haden
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At-Large

Felecia Pryor 734-560-6384
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President Dianne Bostic Robinson; **1st Vice President** Michael Mowers; **2nd Vice President** Patricia Pickett;
Secretary Deniera Davis; **Treasurer** Raymond Landsberg



Historic Boston-Edison Association
PO Box 02100
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Boston·Edison
HOLIDAY HOME TOUR WEEKEND

B-E A VOLUNTEER!

Contact HHT@historicbostonedison.org for how you can B-E involved!

Boston·Edison

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