

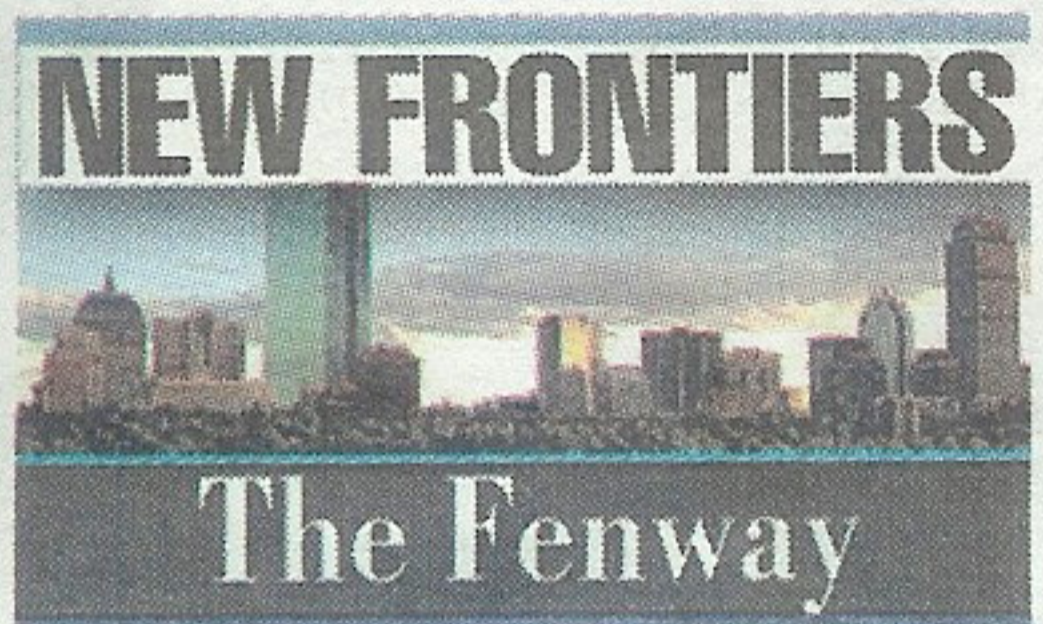
FENWAY HITTING HOME RUNS

Area's transformation going strong, more on the way

Editor's note: As the economy improves, Boston developers have their sights set on massive projects. In this series, the Herald examines plans for the city's New Frontiers.

By **BRENDAN LYNCH**

The Fenway-Kenmore area's transformation from gritty to upscale has continued unabated through both the economic downturn of the early 2000s and the current recession, even as devel-



opments in other parts of Boston have stalled.

Meredith Management President John Rosenthal has been working on Fenway Center, a mixed-use development to be built over the Massachusetts Turnpike, for more than 10 years. He said he likely would've proceeded with the project even if he knew the recession was coming, because the neighborhood's assets — the Longwood Medical Area, Fenway Park, more than 100,000 college students within a mile, and proximity to the Pike, commuter rail and the Green Line — are attractive even in a downturn.

Rosenthal, also a noted gun-control activist, bought a garage abutting the Pike 15 years ago and has used it to display a series of gun-control billboards since.

"Kenmore Square is a completely different place than when I bought the Lansdowne Garage and put up the gun billboard in 1995," he said.

Almost every part of the area has been overhauled — the Hotel Commonwealth replaced rundown buildings in Kenmore Square; the Red Sox added Green Monster seats, a bar and a Yawkey Way concourse to Fenway Park; Lansdowne Street has gained the new House of Blues and Lansdowne Pub; the Landmark Center is building an eight-story addition; and Boylston Street has become home to luxury apartments and a bar owned by NESN Red Sox commentator Jerry Remy.

Many of these projects stem from zoning changes made about five years ago to allow mixed-use buildings of more than one story,

What's developing

Despite the recession, the massive Fenway Center is moving forward and projects such as Jerry Remy's restaurant, a House of Blues club and a luxury apartment complex have beefed up Boylston Street.



1 Fenway Center

For video of John Rosenthal, go to bostonherald.com



STAFF PHOTOS BY ANGELA ROWLINGS

according to Boston Redevelopment Authority director John Palmieri.

"Now that's bearing fruit," Palmieri said.

Samuels & Associates executive vice president Peter Sougarides said two recent projects were direct results of the zoning changes.

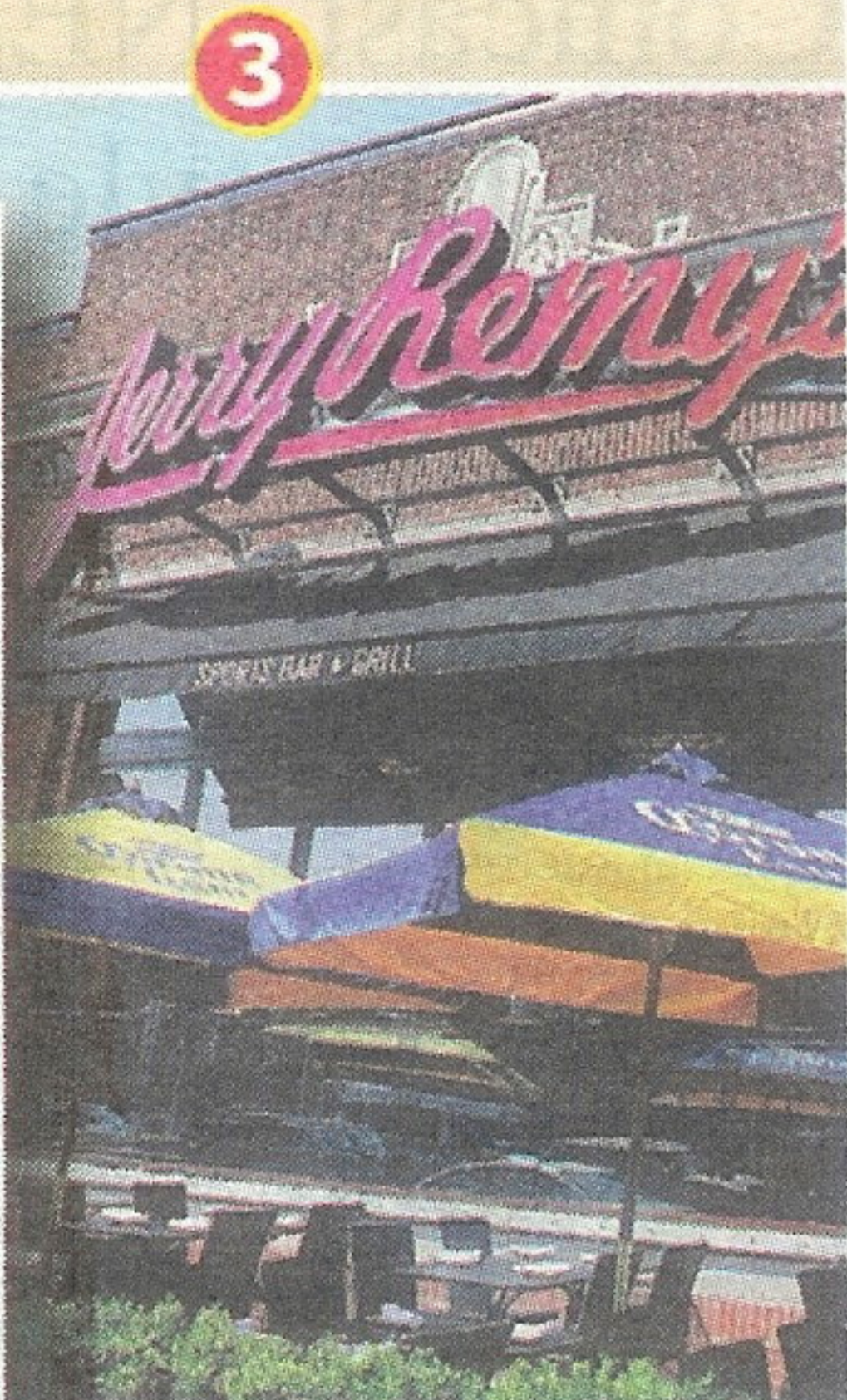
"The old zoning was the original zoning since the '60s," he said. "The new zoning increased (the allowed) density and dealt with new development issues."

Samuels & Associates recently finished two Fenway developments it had been working on since 1998: Fenway Triangle Trilogy, which opened in 2006, and 1330 Boylston, which opened in 2008.

Trilogy includes 500 apartments, a Burton's Grill and a Starbucks; 1330 Boylston includes 200 apartments, a rooftop pool, an Up-



2



3



4 Trilogy

STAFF GRAPHIC BY LARRY SEIL

per Crust pizza shop and The Citizen, a restaurant from David Dubois, co-owner of the Franklin Cafe.

Both developments are about full in a strong rental market, Sougarides said.

Samuels & Associates has other mixed-use projects in the planning stages. In the meantime, the developer has converted a Boylston Street gas station into Tasty Burger, another Dubois restaurant, as part of an effort to make the area more of a main street for the neighborhood, Sougarides said.

"It's always been filled with gas stations and fast-food restaurants and parking lots," he said.

While Rosenthal said the recession wouldn't have stopped Fenway Center, it hasn't helped either.

"Financing is no fun these days, that's for sure," he said.

The first phase includes build-

ing a deck over the Turnpike, connecting the Brookline Street and Beacon Street bridges, and three residential buildings with 100 apartments each and retail space. Construction is set to start next summer and should take about two years to complete at about \$50 million, Rosenthal said.

The first phase also includes a 700-space garage. The Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization, a nonprofit organization representing the interests of the Longwood Medical Area, has leased 500 of the spaces five days a week for 20 years, which helps with the financing, Rosenthal said. He's close to signing an organic grocer as a tenant.

Phase 2, which includes office space, won't start until Rosenthal finds a tenant to fill it, and could cost in the ballpark of \$300 million, he said.