

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

March 2008

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ANC News

NOTES FROM THE FEB. 13 MEETING

Police Provide Safety Update

Police Sergeant Paul Oppedisano reported that coyotes have been sighted on several occasions in Agassiz and nearby neighborhoods. He brought copies of a message from the Cambridge Animal Commission, (also available online at www.cambridgema.gov), that offered tips for safety precautions related to coyotes.

Best practices to avoid problems with coyotes, as listed on the Animal Commission website, include:

- Secure your garbage;
- Don't feed or try to pet coyotes;
- Keep your pets safe, especially cats and small dogs;
- Keep bird feeder areas clean;
- Feed pets indoors;
- Close off crawl spaces under porches and sheds;

- Cut back bushy edges in your yard;
- Do not approach a coyote;
- A loud noise or a bright light will usually scare a coyote away.

Sgt. Oppedisano stated, "The Animal Commission has described a coyote's territory as ranging between 2 and 30 miles, so it's possible the sightings are of the same coyote traveling through the neighborhoods."

Fred Meyer, ABC Board member and long-time Agassiz resident, added, "We should remind neighbors to make sure that their cats and small dogs are in at night."

The Sergeant also provided details about a recent string of armed robberies in Cambridge. He stated, "They were a one-day occurrence, four robberies in 25 minutes reported between 8:10 PM and 8:45 PM. The suspect traveled from Prospect Street to Divinity Ave. to Shady Hill Ave. and then to Highland Ave. in Somerville."

"The description we had was for a 20-25 year old Hispanic male wearing a hooded sweatshirt and bandana. The suspect we have in mind is currently in a rehabilitation unit being treated

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



MARCH 19 - 7:30 PM

Baldwin School Cafeteria
28 Sacramento Street
(Press buzzer for entry)

AGENDA

- *Introducing Green Decade Cambridge*
- *Update on New Lesley Dorm*

Brief update on:

- *Maud Morgan Visual Art Center*

for an overdose. There have been no more armed robberies since the 16th of January.”

Additionally, there were five housebreaks reported between January 22 and February 1. Three of these occurred in the Agassiz neighborhood on Oxford and Forest Streets, and two were in the Peabody neighborhood. The housebreaks happened in the afternoon and entrance was gained by breaking through the front doors. The police have an idea of who is committing the housebreaks, though there haven’t been any since February 1. No one was home at the time of the robberies, and the houses broken into did not have alarm systems.

For more information, please contact the Cambridge Police at (617) 349-3300 or visit them online at www.cambridgema.gov/CPD/.

Update on New Lesley Dorm

After providing a quick recap of Lesley University’s presentation on their proposed dorm at February’s ANC meeting, Bill Doncaster, Director of Public Affairs at Lesley, explained that the working group that resulted from that meeting has been actively discussing the dorm. He stated, “With four meetings in four weeks, we have been keeping the architects very busy!”

According to Mr. Doncaster, representatives from Lesley and the neighborhood shared their respective goals at the initial working group meeting. He summarized: “Lesley’s goals are to create 80 beds by September 2009. Resident’s goals were focused on placing retail along on the entire length of the building facing Mass. Ave., and reducing surface parking to a scale more appropriate to the neighborhood.”

Joining Mr. Doncaster to present updated drawings of the dorm to be built at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Wendell, were the architectural team of Bruner/Cott, including Simeon Bruner, Jason Forney, Susan Tang and Morel Orta, as well as Marylou Batt, VP of Administration at Lesley, William Suter, Campus Planner and George Smith, Director of Operations.

A New Look for the Proposed Building

Architects from Bruner/Cott addressed the council and displayed drawings and a Styrofoam model of the proposed 5-story building on Mass. Ave., as well as a newly added, 3-story second building that will be constructed on Wendell St. They reiterated that the buildings are in a zone that is divided between residential and business, and will require variances for floor area ratio, parking, and a small variance for height to allow for a better retail environment on the first floor. Both new buildings will be set back from the sidewalk to provide for wider passage.

Simeon Bruner, Principal at Bruner/Cott explained, “We’ve gone back and looked at the site. We moved the residence director’s apartment to Wendell Street to make the Mass. Ave. edge of the building all retail, and we were able to cut the parking by half. The retail, residence director’s apartment, and common space will all be located on the ground floor of the building that faces Mass. Ave.”

He added, “Our goal is to design a 21st century building that looks back. We want to have a combination of smooth and articulated materials. The materials we’re considering are buff brick with a range of colors and iron spots, “Norman bricks,” which are larger and more horizontal, and cement clapboards, which will wear better than wooden clapboards.”

George Smith of Lesley added, “We’ve increased the retail space to 2500 square feet. Also, thanks to the addition of the set back 5th floor, we were able to raise the retail unit’s ceiling height to twelve feet (up from nine.) We’re



looking to have a community friendly business in addition to the ATM.”

Fred Meyer, noted, “It wasn’t Lesley that pushed for the higher overall building height. It was the neighbors. We tried to think creatively and not be restricted by zoning.”

Parking on Site

Lesley has reduced their official parking spaces to seven, none of which are available to students, and Mr. Doncaster reminded the group that students cannot register vehicles from their dormitory addresses.

Resident’s Comments

Residents voiced a number of differing opinions about the façade of the new dorm; some asked for a more visually striking building, while others expressed approval of some design elements added by Bruner/Cott. Mr. Doncaster noted that, while Lesley needs to build with expediency, the dorm is still a design-in-process and the University will consider resident’s suggestions and criticisms throughout the process.

Marylou Batt of Lesley added, “I think our goal has been not to stand out at this end of Mass. Ave. We were looking to create an attractive building that adds to the quality of Mass. Ave., the student’s experience, and to the community.”

The council voted unanimously to show support for Lesley’s plans involving:

- Greater FAR for the new dorm
- Increased height to accommodate first floor retail
- An acceptable site plan
- Reducing parking on the site; shield-

ing those spaces from view by placing a townhouse style building on Wendell Street

- The community expressed mixed viewpoints about the dorm’s façade and requested that Bruner/Cott continue to work on it

Lesley University will continue to meet with the working group, and has agreed to present and discuss updates at a future ANC meeting. With the community’s support, Lesley will also move forward to apply for the required permits and variances for the site.

Ms. Batt concluded, “I’d like to thank the working group for committing to four hour and a half meetings, and I thank you all in advance for your additional help. I would also like to thank the architects of Bruner/Cott.”

Shady Hill Update

City Counselor Brian Murphy provided a brief update on the status of the Stop Work Order for the green at Shady Hill Square. He stated, “The Board of Zoning Appeals decided that there has been too much confusion about ownership status of the lot and has elected not to lift the Stop Work Order. The action has now moved to the land court.”



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More info: contact Phoebe Sinclair at psinclair@agassiz.org or (617) 349-6287 x10.

ABC Community

2007 END-OF-YEAR DONORS

The following donors were accidentally omitted from last month's list. Our apologies!

Donors

Mimi and Paul Ezust
Meri Fox
Sarah Gallivan and Gopal Kadagarthur
Stephen and Charlotte Diamond

Donations to Agassiz Baldwin Community provide valuable funds for many programs, including scholarships, community events, services, and this newsletter.

Tax deductible donations can be sent to: Agassiz Baldwin Community, 20 Sacramento St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

LETTER TO AGASSIZ COMMUNITY

Prepared by Merav Gold, Shady Hill Sq. Advocate

I want to thank the membership of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council again for an impressive outpouring of remarkable letters that, in addition to a citywide response, put sustained pressure on the City Council, Inspectional Services, and the Board of Zoning Appeals to act to protect the common green at Shady Hill Square.

The Building Commissioner, citing "substantial questions" whether or not the developer had sufficient ownership of the green "to support a

building permit," has issued a statement that the Stop Work Order, which prevents construction, will stay in effect until these questions are resolved in court or by settlement. We feel that maintaining the Stop Work Order, rather than revoking the permit, enables the City to sidestep municipal responsibility for both the permitting process and the protection of a remarkable historical site, by deferring resolution of the case to a state judicial forum.

We believe it is necessary to continue to put sustained pressure on the City to revoke the permit to build on the center green at Shady Hill, and allow the Historical Commission to proceed. In addition, the developers need to be encouraged to come to the table. The land court case, which is the last remaining obstacle to building, is an enormous financial drain on the abutters, who will also need public support in an attempt to purchase and preserve the green.

The support of the City, through the use of historic preservation funds, would send a message to the developer that their project is unacceptable to Cambridge, and that it is time to negotiate. For the center green, in common use for almost a century and a prime example of early conservation design, to be formally open to everyone is a fitting conclusion to its Garden City legacy of Open Green.

For more information, please contact Ms. Gold at hnnhgold@yahoo.com.



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Agassiz Afterschool Programs

AGASSIZ HIP HOP FESTIVAL 2008

The highlight of Agassiz's Introducing Arts performance series for children, the 12th Annual Hip Hop Festival wowed a crowd of 200+ with fast moves, fresh beats, and a few surprise treats.

New to the festival, dancers from the Deborah Mason School of Dance got the crowd going with breakdancing from Hip Hop's past, and

offered a peak at the future with a fascinating display of “krumping.”

The festival showcased the talent of young dancers from The Community Art Center (CAC) Kids, OrigiNation, Jam’nastics; and a CAC Kids drumcore stole the show with their infectious rhythms and on-stage confidence.

Missed the show? Catch a clip online at www.wickedlocal.com/cambridge/fun/food/x1529757561.

See you next year!



REGISTER NOW FOR OUTBACK SUMMER PROGRAM 2008

Register now for our popular summer program offered exclusively to kids entering grades one through six. We offer a flexible summer schedule --children may attend for just one week, all eight weeks, or any combination of weeks throughout the summer. Choose from two different daily schedules, “regular day,” which runs from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM, or “extended day” from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

Registration

Applicants are accepted on a “first come, first

served” basis. The program opens on Monday, June 30 (closed on July 4th) and runs for eight weeks through Friday, August 22, 2008.

The registration fee is \$50 for the first child and \$25 for each additional child attending Outback.

The cost per week is as follows:

- \$214 for regular day, 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM
- \$268 for extended day, 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM

A non-refundable registration fee and 50% deposit of the total cost are due at time of registration. Families with more than one child attending will receive a 10% sibling discount.

Contact ABC for additional information at (617) 349-6287. You may also download an Outback 2008 Registration Form at www.agassiz.org/OutbackSummerProgram.asp.

BE A CIT IN THE SUMMER!

Calling all youth entering grades 7 to 9! Sign up for our Counselor-in-Training program. This eight-week summer program offers four two-week CIT sessions, each running Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM. Participants are expected to complete all ten days of each session.



Every CIT will be paired with an Outback Summer Program staff member as their mentor. CITs receive a stipend and enjoy a party at the end of a successful experience.

How to Apply

Contact ABC for an application form at (617) 349-6287, or download one from the web at www.agassiz.org/OutbackSummerProgram.asp.

New CIT applicants will be interviewed by the Program Director prior to acceptance in the program. As there are limited CIT positions available each session, we may not be able to place every applicant.

FLYING ZUCCHINI CAFE SERVES UP HEALTHY MEALS AT AGASSIZ AFTERSCHOOL

On Thursday, February 13, Agassiz Afterschool Students K through five served dinner to a packed crowd of 70+ diners at the Flying Zucchini Cafe. For two evenings only, Agassiz Afterschool students transformed the Baldwin School cafeteria into a very popular, exclusive restaurant, seating nearly two hundred parents, children, and members of the Agassiz Baldwin community.

The restaurant, a program developed by ABC and Afterschool staff, and supported through a grant from the Cambridge Agassiz Harvard Fund, allowed children to experience for themselves how a restaurant runs behind-the-scenes.

Students had the opportunity to work on all aspects of operating a restaurant, from menu development to restaurant management, cooking to serving, customer service to designing décor and planning ambiance, and more. Also, with a focus on healthful eating, students practiced making healthy choices for themselves, and planned a menu of wholesome treats for their families to enjoy.

ABC thanks the following partners for their help with the Afterschool Healthy-Eating Restaurant Project/Flying Zucchini Café: Cambridge Health Alliance, Culinary Program at Cambridge Rindge & Latin, and Cambridge Common Restaurant.

Please enjoy these photos from the project: (starting in the upper left corner) students tour the kitchen at Cambridge Common Restaurant, a parent teaches the art of making wontons, a young server, students perform a skit, waitstaff prepare to serve, parents peruse the menu. Also, check out what the Cambridge Chronicle newspaper had to say about the café at: <http://blogs.townonline.com/cambridge/?p=13602>.



City Wide

RECYCLE YOUR CFLS!

Prepared by Cambridge Dept. of Public Works

Fluorescent bulbs are not accepted curbside as trash or recycling because they contain mercury and must be disposed of properly.



Three options for recycling:

- 1.) Residents and businesses with 50 employees or less may bring bulbs to the Drop-Off Center during open hours (Tues./Thurs. 4:00-7:30 PM and Sat 9:00-4:00 PM).
- 2.) Residents may also bring fluorescent bulbs to the Household Hazardous Waste annual collections.
- 3.) Bulbs may also be brought to the stores listed below:
 - Dickson Brothers, 26 Brattle St.
 - Economy Hardware, 438 Mass Ave.
 - Inman Square Hardware, 1337 Cambridge St.
 - Masse Hardware, 249 Walden St.
 - Tags Ace Hardware, 26 White St.
 - Whole Foods, 340 River St.

Though all fluorescent bulbs contain mercury, their use is encouraged because they are highly energy efficient. Mercury is a naturally occurring element that can be toxic to humans, wildlife, and can pollute our environment. Also, be aware of fish consumption advisories. Call 1(866)-9MERCURY for details.

What can I bring?

All fluorescent bulbs and lamps; straight, U-tube, compact, and High Intensity Discharge (HID), mercury thermostats, and thermometers.

How should I bring in bulbs?

Pack in original or replacement packaging. Don't break or crush to consolidate, because mercury will be released. Don't tape together.

What if a lamp breaks?

Open window to ventilate room. Avoid breathing in immediately after breakage. Sweep up broken glass and powder. Store in a sealed container. To prevent glass splinters, do not use bare hands when handling broken bulbs.



Sacramento Street Gallery

BOOKS, BOTTLES, BOATS, ETC.

Sacramento St. Gallery presents watercolors by Brenda Engel, on display through March 28, 2008.



Ms. Engel says, "Until recently, I painted directly from life: plants and flowers, landscapes, boats and waterfront scenes, streets and houses, arrangements of objects. More recently I have begun using photographs which I find a useful way to simplify the world, helping to reduce it from three to two dimensions...I find myself, like so many artists, moving towards the less representational."

Ms. Engel lives in North Cambridge with her husband and members of her extended family.

Gallery Hours: M-F, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

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Community Calendar

March 2008

Wednesday, March 12	6:00 - 7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St, 2nd Floor Public welcome
Monday, March 17		Evacuation Day Baldwin School closed, Afterschool & Preschool closed
Wednesday, March 19	7:30 - 9:00 PM	ANC Monthly Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Baldwin School Cafeteria, 28 Sacramento St. All are welcome
Thursday, March 20		First Day of Spring
Friday, March 21		Baldwin School closed, Afterschool & Preschool closed

The Whistler is published monthly September - June by the Agassiz Baldwin Community, distribution 2,000. Call (617) 349-6287 to receive by mail or email. The newsletter is also posted each month online at www.agassiz.org. Items of interest to the neighborhood may be submitted for consideration no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication date.

THE WHISTLER MARCH 2008



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