

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

October 2014

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ANC News

NOTES FROM THE SEPT. 9 MEETING

Residential Development at 260 & 266 Beacon St.

ANC hosted a discussion of proposed residential developments at 260 and 266 Beacon St. The properties, located in Somerville and bordering Carver St. in the Agassiz neighborhood, are being developed by two companies, one of which is Highland Development, a Medford-based construction management and real estate development company.

Highland Development, represented by Ben Rogan and Mark Baranski, is currently working on a number of projects near or in the Agassiz neighborhood, including a residential building on White St. in Porter Square and a Lesley University dorm on Oxford St.

They presented the following details about the 260 Beacon Street project:

- Highland will remove the existing North Charles Associates building and construct a new, three-story building with 17 residential 1, 2 & 3 bedroom rental units of approximately 1,200-1,600 square feet
- The first floor will contain two retail spaces
- A green wall at the front of the building and



- landscaped screen along the Beacon/Carver property line
- Proposed green roof comprised of ground cover (not an active garden) and solar voltaic panels
- Mechanicals will be placed nearer to Beacon St.
- Following feedback from Beacon St. residents, Highland is seeking a variance to reduce parking by ten spaces
- Increased bicycle parking
- Stormwater run-off will be maintained on-site

Environmental Remediation

The property is receiving ongoing environmental remediation of TCE, a compound used by a silver-plating company that was previously located on the site. The remediation process uses vapor and charcoal, and is being performed in part by Harvard University.

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



OCT. 14 - 7:30 PM

Maud Morgan Arts
20A Sacramento Street
2D Studio, 2nd Floor

Agenda:

- Cambridge Police Review & Advisory Board Update
- New LED streetlights in Cambridge
- Proposed Starbucks mural on Shepard St.

The contamination is reported to have migrated towards Beacon St. and there's no indication that Carver St. is affected. The clean-up is estimated to cost one million dollars.

Q&A

Q: Why didn't Highland Development connect with the Carver St. neighbors earlier in the process?

A: The Somerville Alderperson contacted the abutters, but only in Somerville. Highland wasn't aware that the Cambridge neighbors were uninformed.

Q: Will air quality be tested during demolition and construction?

A: Yes. Also, water will be used to reduce dust during demolition.

Q: Will the Carver St. trees' roots be impacted by the construction?

A: As the building will be a distance from Carver St., the trees shouldn't be affected.

Q: What plans are in place to mitigate rodents and noise?

A: Precautions to protect against rats will include rodent traps, and Highland will work to minimize noise. They intend to offer two-week lookout schedules, which will include sound ratings.

Q: Will a fence separate the properties from Carver St.?

A: Yes, Highland plans to install a six-foot fence along the Carver St. edge.

Q: What's the construction schedule?

A: The project is expected to take 14-15 months, beginning winter 2015.

Conclusion

"We think this is a great project with great architecture. We'll be helping to remediate a dirty site and replacing the current use with one that's more amenable to the neighbors," concluded Mr. Baranski. "We heard your

concerns belatedly, which we apologize for. We're more than happy to continue talking with neighbors, and want to respond reasonably to your concerns."

Information

There will be a link to the construction schedule on Highland's website at:
www.highlanddevelopment.net

Learn more and view the proposed project at:
bit.ly/HD-260-Beacon-St

Cambridge Conversations Lead to Citywide Plan

Ellen Kokinda, Assistant Planner and Iram Farooq, Chief of Policy & Planning for the Community Development Department (CDD) joined the Council to discuss 'Cambridge Conversations', the initial stages of a process that will culminate in a new comprehensive plan for the city.

"We last did a project of this magnitude back in the 1990s," Ms. Farooq explained. "We expect to work on a first stage of the new plan from 2014 to 2016. We've hosted community conversations across the city, as well as held drop-in sessions. We're continuing to go out to neighborhood meetings and also connect with immigrant and other communities that are harder to reach."

According to the CDD reps, the city's previous master plan resulted in significant changes, including a 2001 re-zoning to reduce commercial densities across the city, address traffic concerns, and provide incentives for housing. The new plan is focused on nine elements: goals and policies, land use, housing, economic development, natural resources, open space, services, circulation, and implementation.

"We're finding that it's hard to separate the elements," stated Ms. Farooq. "The more contemporary version of this process is to think holistically. We want to create a shared vision

and use the plan as a way for us to come together as a community.”

Ms. Farooq added that she expects the process will be informed by some of the city’s other ongoing efforts, such as the NetZero Task Force, Bicycle Master Planning process, and Nexus Study (affordable housing/commercial development.)

Concluding the presentation, Ms. Kokinda and Ms. Farooq invited the Council to respond to questions CDD poses at Community Conversations:

1. What is special about Cambridge? What could be working better?
2. What should Cambridge’s priorities be for a citywide comprehensive plan?
3. How would you get others involved?

Below is a selection of concerns and ideas voiced at the meeting:

- Desire for more city parking lots and garages, and an interest in strategies that encourage the city and private landowners to work together to rent or build new parking
- Lack of green space in the Agassiz neighborhood
- Addressing the “crisis of affluence”
- Residents seem to be increasingly paving their front yards to create more parking spaces, consequentially reducing green space
- Inclusionary zoning
- Historic preservation

Cambridge City Councillor Nadeem Mazen, present at the meeting, spoke about a recent petition submitted by Councillor Dennis Carlone, calling for the city to create a comprehensive citywide master plan.

Councillor Mazen also discussed engaging residents and other stakeholders to not just identify issues, but act on them. He stated, “It will be good to know what desires people have

that are more urgent and therefore should be addressed quickly.”

Questions/Comments/Suggestions

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Check out: #Cambconvo on Twitter



Community

SAVE THE DATE - ANNUAL THANKSGIVING POTLUCK FEAST

Save the date for our 43rd
Annual Thanksgiving
Potluck Feast.



When: Tuesday,
November 25,
5:30-7:30 PM

Where: Maria L. Baldwin School
Dining Hall, 28 Sacramento St.

Join us for an evening of celebration, good company, and delicious food. Each year’s event is successful due largely to the generosity of our neighbors and community. You can help by bringing a side dish ample enough for your family and a few more to share.

This year, we need eight people to cook turkeys, and four to help carve before and during dinner. Volunteer now! Contact Phoebe Sinclair at psinclair@agassiz.org or (617) 349-6287 x10.

Learn more online at:
bit.ly/thanksgiving-potluck-feast

Community Calendar

October 2014

Monday, October 6		Eid Al-Adha Holiday, ABC programs closed, ABC office open
Wednesday, October 8	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting
Monday, October 13		Columbus Day Holiday, ABC programs closed, ABC office open
Tuesday, October 14	7:30-9:00 PM	ANC Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento St., 2D Studio All are welcome, please join us!

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 should be submitted for consideration no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication date.

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VOLUNTEER WITH AGASSIZ BALDWIN

Volunteer to cook a turkey for
our 43rd Annual Thanksgiving
Potluck Feast (November 25)!
Details inside . . .

