

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

January 2014

IN THIS ISSUE

ANC News: New Landscape Design for Fire Command Center, Introducing Mass Save, Lesley Church Move 1-3

ABC Children's Programs: 18th Annual Hip Hop Festival 3

ANC News

NOTES FROM THE DEC. 10 MEETING

New Landscape Design for Fire Command Center

Nazneen Cooper, Assistant Dean for Campus Design & Planning for the Harvard University Faculty of Arts & Sciences, and Tom Lucey, Director of Government and Community Relations, presented to the Council a new landscape design for the Fire Command Center, a small brick structure on Hammond St.

One of two egresses from a parking garage beneath the Northwest Science Building, (the other is located within the building), the Fire Command Center was created when the University agreed to change the building's orientation at neighbors' request, so that just a portion faces Hammond St. The Fire Command Center serves as both an ordinary and an emergency exit.

While satisfied overall with the Northwest Science Building, Hammond St. neighbors requested that Harvard replace the Fire Command Center with something that better compliments the building behind it. An attempt to redesign and rebuild the Fire Command Center with Harvard-hired architects was halted during the 2008 financial crisis, during which time the

University installed landscaping, including fir trees, a grove of deciduous aspen trees and climbing ivy,

to shield the structure from view and match the original planting palette established by Michael Van Valkenburgh.



"Although they added texture and seasonal character, the aspens didn't do what we hoped," admitted Ms. Cooper. "We also need to take into consideration that, with just four feet of soil depth over the garage, this is essentially a 'roofscape.'"

The plan going forward includes:

- Paint the structure's (currently white) doors a brownish-red to match the brick of the Northwest Science Building, effectively making the doors "disappear"
- Plant two different varieties of evergreen arborvitae trees across the front and side (completed Dec. 2013)
- Plant two new fir trees to further block the

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



JAN 14- 7:30 PM

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

Agenda:

- **Sacramento Field Renovations** with Cambridge Community Development
- Update on **Lesley Church Move and Construction Plans**

Fire Command Center from view

- In the spring, add ornamental grasses around the trees and install a wooden trellis on the face of the brick walls to encourage the ivy to climb upward

Q&A

Q: What's the plan for the nearby Cambridge Electron Accelerator, managed by Harvard and MIT?

A: The University is not looking at developing that space right now.

Q: Won't the ornamental grass grow too tall?

A: We can review varieties with the neighbors and plant grass that will grow to the appropriate height.

Q: Why not install low bushes like at the Divinity School?

A: We believe ornamental grass better addresses the community's desire for visibility and safety. Additionally, the grass will complement the nearby Divinity School's landscape, lighten the effect of the evergreens, and provide texture and interest year-round.

Q: Now that the aspens have grown, it seems a shame to cover them up with evergreens.

A: We will not cover the aspens. The arborvitae trees have been planted behind the aspens as a backdrop. We can review the design for the introduction of ornamental grasses with neighbors in the spring.

In conclusion, the Council thanked Ms. Cooper and Mr. Lucey for their continued efforts.

Introducing Mass Save

"Cambridge Energy Alliance encourages residents to go green," stated Dmitriy Nikolayev, Outreach Event Representative with Next Step Living.

Next Step Living, a home energy solutions company begun in 2008 that provides assessments to over 2,500 homes across the state each

month, is one of the largest contractors working with Cambridge Energy Alliance (CEA), a city program that addresses Cambridge's carbon footprint and helps residents save money. Mass Save is a state program funded through utility bills.

Attending the evening's meeting on behalf of the CEA, Mr. Nikolayev detailed two programs offered through Mass Save.

1.) Home Energy Assessments

- Free two-three hour home analysis (basement to attic)
- Combustion Safety Testing of heaters, furnaces, and other vented appliances
- Screening for eligibility for the ENERGY STAR® refrigerator rebate
- Weatherization discounts of 75% off, (up to \$2,000), towards the cost of work
- Infrared testing, if applicable
- Free air sealing, if applicable
- Installation of no-cost immediate savings measures such as compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), programmable thermostats, and water saving devices, as needed
- Personalized report outlining recommended energy efficiency improvements

2.) Residential Heat Loan Program

- This lending program provides 0% interest loans up to \$25,000 for retrofits as well as assistance towards the purchase of new heating, windows, or solar panels. (A Home Energy Assessment is the first step to getting a Heat Loan)

Q&A:

Q: Does the initial assessment come with advice?

A: Yes. Certified home energy advisors can offer practical advice in addition to a personalized energy assessment report (mentioned above).

Q: How often are assessments needed?

A: Mass Save suggests one assessment for each home.

Q: Are energy companies seeing a reduction in power since this program began?

A: In general, energy consumption in the US is growing. However, Massachusetts's energy efficiency measures help balance the trend of increased energy usage. Our state is rated #1 in the nation for energy efficiency. Learn more at: bit.ly/energy-efficiency-scorecard.

One Council member added that residents who own historic properties can seek assistance from the Cambridge Historical Commission with repairing and updating old windows to be more energy efficient.

Mr. Nikolayev concluded, "Through partnering with community organizations like CEA, Next Step Living aspires to be a one-stop shop, offering the latest green technology and savings to residents."

Learn more about Next Step Living and sign up for a free home energy assessment at: bit.ly/next-step-living-and-cea.

Lesley Chruch Move

Below is a message submitted by John Sullivan, Lesley University Director of Communications. He can be contacted at jsulli24@lesley.edu or (617) 349-8514.

"On Thursday, Dec. 5, Lesley's contractor, the construction firm of John Moriarty and Associates, and its subcontractor Dixon Construction, used beam rollers to ferry the former church building 80 feet south on Massachusetts Avenue. The move was accomplished without incident, took approximately three hours and, over the course of that time, hundreds of neighbors and passersby took at least a few moments out of their day to witness the move.

Joining them were several news helicopters, as well as reporters and camera operators from all Boston-area television news stations, two news radio stations, two newspapers, and Cambridge Community Television.

After the new year, we plan to begin getting the former church site ready to accommodate the foundation of the new Lunder Arts Center building (which, as you know, will be joined to the renovated and restored church building by means of a glass connector).

Lesley University is honored and humbled to be part of Porter Square's history and we thank you all for your valuable feedback and general good cheer along the way."

Read more at: bit.ly/lesley-church-move.



Agassiz Baldwin Children's Programs

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 18TH ANNUAL HIP HOP FESTIVAL

The 18th Annual Hip Hop Festival, a showcase of hip hop dance and music, features talented young performers from all over Cambridge.



Held on stage at the Maria L. Baldwin School, past performances have included MC Naheem Garcia, The FloorLords, OriginNation, and more! Stay tuned for this year's line-up.

What: 18th Annual Hip Hop Festival
When: Thursday, February 20, 2:00-3:00 PM
Where: Baldwin School Stage (basement level), 28 Sacramento Street
Tickets: \$2 per person, \$5 per family; Agassiz Baldwin Children's Program families free; afterschool programs free, but please call ahead

See photos from 2013: bit.ly/hip-hop-photos-2013.

Community Calendar

January 2014

Tuesday, January 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!
Wednesday, January 15	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St, 2nd Floor Public welcome
Monday, January 20		Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, ABC School Programs and office closed

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