



December 1988

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Neighborhood Council Notes.....

(notes from the November 9th ANC meeting)

General Business

The Board of Zoning Appeals has approved a drive up window for Cambridge Trust to be located in their new building, the old site of the Chang Sho located directly across from Garfield St. on Mass. Av

The renovations to the Aiden Tot Lot were discussed and it was decided to have larger meeting which would specifically focus on tot lot issues including safety and rules. (The Agassiz School Improvement Committee was contacted, and a joint neighborhood - school meeting has been planned for December 1 to brainstorm ideas for rules as well as develop a list of safety problems for Rob Steck, playground designer at Community Development Department.) Anyone who missed that meeting and wishes to add input can call the council office at 498-9056

Ed Cyr spoke about a new citizens activist group, recently incorporated as CAMBRIDGE CITIZENS FOR LIVEABLE NEIGHBORHOODS whose "purpose is to accomplish what our City government has thus far failed to do: Control over development, and guide Cambridge's future." The Agassiz Neighborhood Council formally appointed Henry Shawah our official representative to that organization. (For more information on Cambridge Citizens for Liveable Neighborhoods, please see article below.)

Ed explained the history behind the Binney St. Garage controversy. It is a chronology beginning in 1973 with the Clean Air Act which specified a parking freeze on number of commercial spaces in the Boston metro area.

next council meeting...

December Council Meeting

Wednesday December 14th at 8:00 p.m.

Agassiz School Library 28 Sacramento St.

Agenda:

7:30 General Business

8:00 Binney St Street Parking Lot update

Where should Ward 7 1 & 2 vote ?

8:00 Charles Sullivan Director, Cambridge Historical

Commission will present a slide/talk on the

"Social History of the Agassiz Neighborhood from 1865"

In 1984 Robert Healy, City Manager, requested permission from Governor Dukakis for the Cambridge Traffic Director to issue garage permits under the freeze. This was permitted as long as the city submit their commercial and on street inventory from 1973, yearly reports, and procedures for implementing the commercial parking freeze. A document Procedures and Criteria was submitted to EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) which was never accepted. A parking inventory was not submitted at this time.

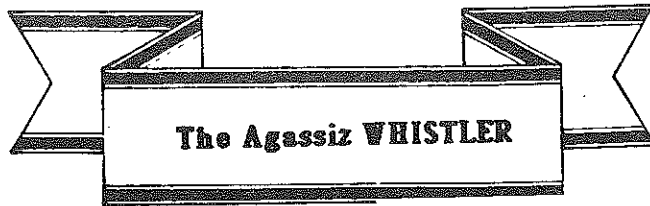
Sometime before February 1988 Cambridge Community Development and Parking and Traffic Departments met with Binney St. developers without neighborhood knowledge or participation. On February 5 George Teso, Cambridge Traffic and Parking Director issued a commercial parking exemption for a 1,530 car garage. (Ed explained that for comparison the Alewife parking lot is 2,000 spaces.) On February 10, Inspectional Services issued a building permit for the same garage.

Residents became alerted to this development in the May 1988 when the construction began. They contacted community development and traffic and parking departments and were given no information. They contacted the License Commission, who encouraged the developers to apply for a garage license. At a July licensing hearing it was recommended that a traffic study be done and a citizens advisory board be established by the city manager. As late as September there was no citizens board established.

By summer the neighborhood had a lawyer represent them. He informed Inspectional Services Department Head, Joseph Cellucci, that the developers were building on land they did not own. Also he informed Mr. Cellucci that the building permit was invalid since Mr. Teso did not have the authority to issue an exemption, since the definition of Commercial Parking that Cambridge had changed in 1984 had never been approved. The building permit was not revoked.

It is found that Cambridge never filed their inventory of parking spaces until September 20, 1988, and on September 30 the EPA ruled the City of Cambridge had violated the Clean Air Act/Parking Freeze of 1973 by giving out permits for thousands of commercial parking spaces over the freeze limit.

We take this much time to explain the troubles in east Cambridge because for many of us, and for many other neighborhoods the problems are the same. Ed Cyr wants us to get behind the residents of Binney St., as their new organization has, and demand as one voice that city government be responsive to all our neighborhoods.



The Agassiz WHISTLER

Karen Swaim, owner of Frameworks, came and spoke about the Business Association of North Cambridge (BANC). They are the owners of small businesses all along Mass. Ave. from the Cambridge Common to the Arlington Line, and many neighbors know them best for their organization of the barrel planters in front of many stores on the avenue.

BANC was organized originally because of the lack of parking, but it has served to reduce the isolation felt by small businesses through meeting and sharing information. It has also served to promote them and make them one voice in their neighborhood, on which they are dependent for their business.

Karen passed out a new pamphlet which is a map of Mass. Ave. that gives names and of the BANC members. She explained how BANC plans a one day Mass. Ave. clean-up each day. She expressed willingness to work with us in mutually rewarding ways, and a future meeting will be planned.



Porter Square Development

PORTER EXCHANGE'S developer, CDIA and neighborhood representatives have agreed on a traffic consultant (Howard Stein-Hudson) and they are currently at work on the traffic study as it relates to the licensing of a large parking garage behind Porter Exchange, for which the only entrance or exit will be Roseland St. We will update as information becomes available to us

TOT LOT UPDATE

A meeting will take place on Thursday, December 1 at 7:30 to discuss the renovation of the Alden Tot Lot, including safety or design problems and rules.

Since *The Whistler* will be delivered too late, some readers may have not been informed about the meeting. Please call the council office at 498-9056 if you have any input for consideration by the tot lot committee regarding rules or potential safety problems.

Report on returned questionnaires

Last month in *The Whistler* we included a questionnaire to find out which neighborhood issues were most important to you. They are still coming in, and due to Charles Sullivan's program on "The Social History of Agassiz since 1865" we will postpone discussion of the questionnaires and issues for the upcoming year until the January council meeting. If you did not receive a questionnaire and would like one, please contact the council office at 498-9056.

Whistler Deadline for December is the 19th of the month. Send us articles, ads, letters to the editor, or any information that you feel would be of interest to the Agassiz neighborhood.

Open letter to the Agassiz Community from the Agassiz Neighborhood Council...

Do you remember how shocked we were last Christmas Day when someone defaced the Agassiz School with racist and anti-semitic graffiti? We haven't forgotten.

That act frightened and offended all of us, and so we decided to show Cambridge how we felt-how we as a community must abhor all acts and symbols of racism in our day to day lives.

Since that incident we have been busy developing a response to our outrage. Many of us have met to develop programs and the funding for them. NOW WE NEED YOUR HELP Join us as we -all the members of the Agassiz Community -celebrate a heritage that has always been ethnically and culturally diverse.

Events include: Native American studies for Agassiz School students, neighborhood forums, an oral history project that includes people of all cultures, a gallery show of photos and memorabilia from the near past, a children about the life of Maria Baldwin, art workshops to gather designs and ideas from the community for a mural by neighborhood artist Wen-Ti Tsen which will be placed in our newly renovated Alden Tot Lot.

We have found a co-ordinator for this project, Cambridge resident Geraldine Guardino. She is an arts administrator, grant writer and currently Co-Chairman of the Somerville Arts Council. Geri has extensive experience working in the arts in Cambridge, and she is a former Boston public school teacher.

We will be contacting you soon to see what project you are willing to help us with. A great deal of planning still needs to be done, and there are a variety of jobs that require all levels of help, from leading workshops to researching historical topics to helping out with gallery and play openings. Some jobs are very time consuming but others require very little commitment

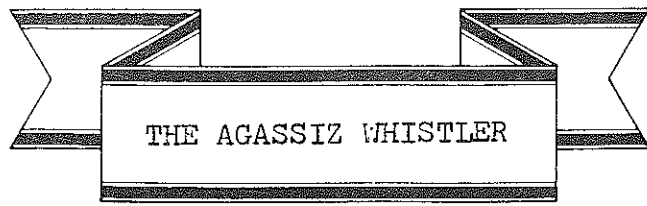


Christmas Tree Sale



The Agassiz Community Children's School located at 1803 Mass. Ave. (in the church at the corner of Roseland St.) will hold its annual Christmas Tree Sale on Saturday and Sunday December 10th and 11th and 17th and 18th between 9 and 6 p.m. For more information call the school at 547-9355.

This sale is a benefit for the preschool, so buy your Christmas tree in the neighborhood this year!



Cambridge Citizens for Liveable Neighborhoods
Steering Committee Pro Tem: Ed Cyr, Philip Dowds, Bob Edbrooke, Dan Geer, Peter Kinder, Jay Marrs, Debra McManus, Gaylen Morgan, Anne Toop, Susan Yanow

Our Problem:

Commercial and institutional over-development press in on Cambridge from every direction; if left unrestrained, over development will burden our city with insoluble problems of congestion, crowding and traffic. At the same time, bizarre conditions in the real estate market result in a dwindling supply of economical housing, and Cambridge is increasingly unaffordable by middle income families. Though our zoning is out of date, our City Administration will not respond to residential concerns, and our City Council is deadlocked.

Cambridge neighborhoods, in short, are in trouble.

Our Purpose:

We are residents from all over Cambridge who are assembling a new citizen activist group, Cambridge Citizens for Liveable Neighborhoods (CCLN). Our purpose is to accomplish what our City government has thus far failed to do: Control over-development, and guide Cambridge's future. In the long term, we will:

- Alert Cambridge residents to over development's threats to their neighborhoods.
- Promote better cooperation among residents and neighborhood groups already active in opposing over-development.
- Combat specific ill-conceived or illegal development projects, and prevent irreversible destructive construction.
- File zoning petitions to protect residential interests and to close loopholes in the Ordinance.
- Urge our City councilors and Officials to take into account the negative impacts of development. And,
- Raise money to support our efforts.

Our longer-range concerns include helping Cambridge formulate a meaningful plan for the future--one which defines the limits and consequences of growth, and which balances commercial and institutional development with housing, including affordable housing.

For more information or to support this organization call 354-5670 or write CCLN P.O. Box 19, Camb 02238. This information was made available to us by Ed Cyr,



Family Folk Dancing at Agassiz

Jill Gleim will lead a series of eight family folk dance nights for the community in the Agassiz School. All are invited to participate. The dance sessions will be held monthly on Fridays, this month on December 9th. The cost will be \$2 per person. For more information contact the neighborhood council office at 498-9056.

CRIMEWATCH

This is a list of crime in the Agassiz Neighborhood
.....October 19 -November 11/21/88....

- Crescent St.....Break and entry (10/26)
- Eustis St..... Hit and run property (10/21)
- Forest St..... Hit and run property(10/21,11/12);
Break and entry (11/2)
- Francis Av.....Malicious destruction property
(10/27)
- Frost St..... Break and entry (11/10)
- Garfield St.....Armed street robbery w/knife (11/7)
- Kirkland at Irving..... Car theft (11/17)
- Mass. Ave.....Car theft (10/21,11/2),Break and
entry (11/10)
- Oxford St..... Armed Robbery (Oxford Spa 10/22
8-9 pm)
- Prentiss St..... Missing Person (11/15)
- Sacramento St.Hit and run property (10/21)
- Wendell St..... Malicious destruction of property
(10/24)

LESLEY COLLEGE News and Events

Lesley College Toy Drive

The Lesley College LINC house will be holding its second annual toy drive this year. Anytime between now and Wednesday December 14th you can drop off toys in good condition to Kirkland House, 61 Oxford St. If there is no answer, just leave the toys on the porch.

The members of LINC will gift wrap the toys, and deliver them to needy children in hospitals of Boston. For more information call the LINC house at 354-9193.

New AGASSIZ youth program begins

The Department of Human Services through the help of manager Bob Goodwin, has hired several youth workers who will provide a youth program which began on November 15th and will continue every Tuesday night through June between 6 and 9 p.m. in Baldwin Hall (Agassiz School Gym). They will provide educational programs, drop in recreational activities and field trips.

The neighborhood council is very happy with this new jointly sponsored program, and we hope it will provide much needed programming for neighborhood youth and Agassiz school students in the 7-8th grades. Everyone is welcome. The first meeting was well attended, and included registration and basketball. The second meeting was a pizza party. For more information please call 498-9072 or 498-9056.

December 1988

Community Calendar

- 12/2 Friday..... Agassiz Youth Chorus led by ADA SNIDER will perform at the Children's Museum 5-9 p.m. Admission \$1. For information call The Children's Museum
- 12/4 Sunday..... Ice Skating Instruction registration MDC rink, Somerville Ave., 11:30 a.m. Call 332-4352 or 508 658-5326
- 12/9 Friday..... Family Folk Dance, 7:30 p.m. Agassiz School Admission \$2
- 12/9 Fri-12/18 Sun..... First Annual Crafts Show and Exhibit, Sacramento St. Gallery
Opens Friday 7-9 pm Sat-Sun 12-5 pm Weekdays 2-6 pm
20 Sacramento St.
- 12/10 Saturday..... Storytelling for Children 2-3 p.m. FREE ADMISSION
Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento St. ROBIN WINTER storyteller
- 12/10 Sat-12/16 Fri..... Kids Only Sale- Inexpensive holiday gifts on sale to children only, Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento St. 12-5, Mon-Friday afterschool - 4pm
- 12/ 14 Wednesday..... Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting
7:30, 20 Sacramento St. (see agenda page 1)
- 12/23 Friday..... Last day of school-full day
- 12/28 Wed-12/30 Fri..... Vacation Week Childcare for Afterschool Students
REQUIRES PRE-REGISTRATION

THE WHISTLER

December 1988

Agassiz Neighborhood Council
20 Sacramento Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

498-9056