



February 1990

Neighborhood Council Notes..... THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Notes from the January 10th council meeting
General Business

Gas tanks appeared to be removed and replaced at the Oxford St. Garage on Eustis St. Richard Scali at the Licensing Commission said that if tanks were replaced no new license was required, and he advised us to contact the fire department to see if permits were issued. The fire department had a permit for removal, then the spot was to be inspected. There was no permit for new tanks. [Since use of this garage has been an ongoing neighborhood concern, Assistant City Manager Richard Rossi was contacted after the meeting, and he agreed to find out what was happening and report back to the neighborhood council.]

It was agreed to contact the DPW and request that the two street sweeping dates that will be missed in the schedule this year be made up. [Street sweeping concerns center around flooding which can occur if the streets and drains aren't kept clear of debris.]

The problem of shoveling the sidewalk in front of the parking lot used by Lesley College adjacent to National Car Rental on Wendell St. was discussed. Lesley has been contacted, but there has been no response in terms of shoveling. [The council will contact Lesley with this information.]

TRAFFIC- Mr. Teso was yet again unable to attend a traffic committee meeting. He sent Lauren Preston in his place. Mr. Preston covered the things the city has done to acknowledge that Oxford is a busy street. This includes painting a line down the middle, restricting the corners of Forest and Oxford and Wendell and Oxford for parking. He said that a flashing light will be placed on the corner of Oxford and Forest [this may be upgraded to a real working traffic light] in the spring.

next council meeting...

February Council Meeting

Wednesday February 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Agassiz Neighborhood Council

20 Sacramento St. (call 498-9056 for information)

7:30 p.m. General Business - Discussion of Agassiz Neighborhood Council's role in upcoming political races.

8:00 p.m. Cara Seiderman, Neighborhood Planner, Cambridge Community Development will explain the process a developer follows when developing property on Mass. Ave. A representative from Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) will discuss how they will proceed in developing the Garfield site as housing, if they are able to obtain the property and funding. (See letter from CHA below.)

Traffic department has also done a classification count at Forest St. 85% passenger, 14% small trucks, and .4% large trucks; a count at Everett St. revealed 95% passenger, 4% small trucks and .4% busses. Residents voiced the need for a traffic light either at Wendell or Everett and Oxford. New traffic studies will take place for both corners.

The new policy of one visitor permit per household, rather than the previous two, was brought up as a concern. Mr. Preston advised residents to write a letter to the Traffic and Parking Department requesting a second permit if it is needed.

There will be parking meters installed on Kirkland St.

The concern over ticketing on Gorham and Howland Streets for wrong way parking was discussed. Although wrong way parking is more convenient for residents, since it's against the law, there is no recourse.

Mr. Preston agreed to look into the following complaints:

- placing the one-way signs of Oxford and Sacramento so that they are visible to traffic

- placing a NO TURN ON RED sign on the corner of Oxford and Sacramento heading north, so cars can't turn when the walk sign is on.

- clearly marking the pedestrian entrance in the fence at Gorham and Museum to prevent cars blocking that entrance

- Harvard Shuttle schedule and route

- street sign on the corner of Gorham and Hammond

It was suggested that the Cambridge Police attend a future meeting to discuss enforcement of traffic regulations.

Other Neighborhood Updates.....

Cambridge Housing Authority responds to *THE WHISTLER*.

I am writing in response to a note regarding the MBTA lot on the corner of Garfield Street and Massachusetts Avenue that I saw in the Agassiz Neighborhood Council's December 1989 newsletter [*THE WHISTLER*]. Please be assured that the Cambridge Housing Authority will certainly inform the neighborhood of our discussions with the City and the MBTA on this site, as we have with our past discussions and with the Hammond Street property.

You may recall that the Cambridge Housing Authority met with the Agassiz Neighborhood Council on four separate occasions in 1983 and 1984 to discuss the potential development of affordable housing on the Garfield St. site. It was on the basis of the neighborhood's favorable response to our proposal of developing 8-10 units of affordable housing that we proceeded to express our interest in the property to the City and the MBTA.

Unfortunately, progress in acquiring and developing the property was effectively stymied by the MBTA's insistence that no building occur within 50 feet of the vent shaft (located on the edge of the property adjacent to Massachusetts Avenue) due to its use for fire fighting access. This restriction made our proposal unworkable and basically prohibited any development of the site.

It was CHA's contention that a no build zone of 25 feet would provide the MBTA with sufficient access to the vent shaft in cases of emergency. This reduction would leave sufficient space on the site for CHA to develop affordable housing, though possible only 4-5 units rather than the initially planned 8-10. Since the reduction of the no build zone was agreed to by the MBTA, the CHA has been waiting for the MBTA to outline their transfer process for the property.

Only recently we have heard from the City that the MBTA is getting ready to transfer the parcel. We are not certain whether this transfer is imminent or even possible as we have not had any direct contact from the MBTA. We suspect, however, that the transfer process will be time consuming and could unfortunately serve to further delay the constructive redevelopment of the site. When we receive further information, we will contact the Agassiz Neighborhood Council and would welcome your continued involvement in the project. In the five years since our initial discussions, the need for affordable housing in Cambridge has continued its dramatic increase (presently there are nearly 4,000 families on our waiting list) making it all the more important that an opportunity such as the Garfield St. lot not be lost.

Please feel free to contact me at 864-3020 or Terry Lurie at 497-6800 if you have any questions or we can provide you with further information. We look forward to our continued involvement with the Agassiz Neighborhood Council as we proceed with the development of Hammond Street and hopefully Garfield Street.

Sincerely,
Daniel J. Wuenschel, Executive Director
Cambridge Housing Authority

Harvard meetings - Joel Bard, Harvard Expansion Committee Chair, had advised us that Kathy Spiegelman will be at the March meeting to discuss progress on the two Harvard sites, Quality Inn and Bence Pharmacy Block. Details to come in the March *Whistler*.

Update on 71 Hammond St. - Chris Weller from Cambridge Housing Authority has provided the ANC with notes from their 6th meeting with EOC (Executive Office of Communities and Development.) He reports that "The Schematic design was finally approved by EOC at that meeting. The architect, Americo Andrade has been proceeding with development of the construction drawings and specifications. ...I hope to invite bids from general contractors in early March "

"They [EOC] have agreed to include sprinklers in the base bid and to make Alternative No. 1 the deletion of the sprinkler system. This change could simply be a symbolic exercise, but we are hopeful it may signal EOC's preparedness to help us solve the problem of paying for the sprinklers."

If you would like a complete copy of the minutes, please call the council office at 498-9056, or Chris Weller at 497-6800.

Of interest to the Neighborhood

Attention Registered Democrats...

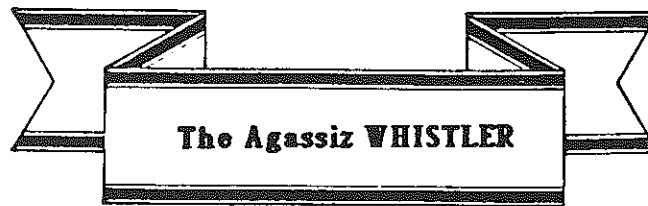
There will be a meeting conducted by the Ward 7 Democratic Committee to elect representatives who will attend a conference in March. At this conference State Democratic Party Committee members for the Middlesex and Suffolk district will be elected.

The meeting will be held on Tuesday February 20, 7 p.m., 20 Sacramento St. All registered democrats may attend. For more information call Bill August, Ward 7 Chairman, at 491-1018 evenings.

Buy your rent controlled building ???

A new program has emerged in Cambridge called Residential Coop Opportunity (RCO) program. Their literature explains that the program works with residents of rent controlled buildings with six or more units and predominately low or moderate income tenants to help them buy and renovate the building they live in and convert it to a limited equity cooperative. The program provides technical, legal and financial assistance, as well as ongoing management support. There are low down payment requirements. Monthly costs after conversion are affordable to current residents.

They seek families, minorities, and in place tenants assisted by the CHA. If you are a tenant group, call Carole Marks at 498-9034 for more information.



1990 Cambridge City Council . . .

Mayor Alice Wolf	48 Huron Ave.	02138
Vice Mayor Ken Reeves	11 Everett St.	02138
Councillor Ed Cyr	106 Dudley St.	02140
Councillor Frank Duehay	26 Lowell St.	02138
Councillor Jonathan Myers	5 Hollis St.	02140
Councillor Sheila Russell	5 Hawthorne Pk.	02138
Councillor Walter Sullivan	28 Putnam Av.	02139
Councillor Timothy Toomey	88 Sixth St.	02141
Councillor William Walsh	26 Hurlbut St.	02138

Councillors can be reached at the council office 498-9094

1990 Council Committees and Chairs

Rules	Walter Sullivan
Government operations	Timothy Toomey
Health and hospitals	Frank Duehay
Environment	Frank Duehay
Rent Control	Ken Reeves
Housing and community development	Ed Cyr
Economic development	Jonathan Myers
Public safety	Ken Reeves
Human services and youth	Jonathan Myers
Civil and human rights	Alice Wolf
Elder affairs	Sheila Russell
Public service	William Walsh
Claims	Timothy Toomey
Traffic and transportation	Sheila Russell
Cable television	William Walsh
Veterans	Walter Sullivan
Sister cities	Jonathan Myers

1990 School Committee

Chairman Alice Wolf
 Vice Chairman Fran Cooper
 Henrietta Davis
 Fred Fantini
 James Rafferty
 Al Vellucci
 Larry Weinstein
 Call school committee office 498-9251 to reach members

State Representatives-Cambridge delegation

Senate:

Michael Barrett (Represents Ward 7-Agassiz)	722-1280
Richard Kraus	722-1432
Michael LoPresti	722-1634

Representatives:

Charles Flaherty	722-2600
Alvin Thompson (Represents Ward 7 precinct 1,2 -Agassiz)	722-2240
Peter Vellucci	722-2090

Coalition for Alewife

Coalition for Alewife is a group from North Cambridge, Belmont and Arlington who oppose the DPW's Preferred Alternative Highway Plan for Alewife. From notes of their 1/14 meeting:

- This superhighway will be wider than the length of a football field and will look like the McCarthy overpass in Somerville. (In addition to two three land frontage roads, a four - lane highway will be elevated 12' above what exists now at the Dewey/Almy Circle;
 - more roads mean more traffic; parkway cannot handle more traffic and the bottlenecks will be pushed further into Arlington and Cambridge neighborhoods;
 - air quality and noise levels are already bad and will get worse;
 - storm drains will flood Alewife Brook with more oil and gas run-off;
 - construction will drive rats into neighborhoods.
- Remember the T;
 -\$60 million of public money for what? While local aid is being slashed.

The goal of the coalition is to slow down the formal environmental review process. A major meeting will take place as *THE WHISTLER* goes to press (1/31). Call Dan Geer at 864-5751 for more information.

FOR SENIORS

The Civic Unity Committee is currently interested in citizens 55 years of age and older to participate in the Social Gerontology Program April 2-13.

The purpose of this forum is to decrease the misunderstandings and misinformation that exist between older and younger citizens, while building bridges of intergeneration/intercultural understanding.

Volunteers will be paid a modest stipend for their attendance.

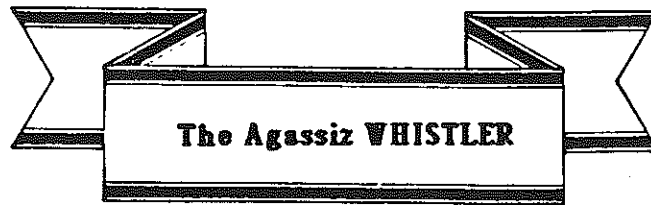
Requirement for participation is an interest to work with young adults and time to participate each day for an hour beginning April 2-13.

Interested persons should contact Denise Simmons at the office of Civic Unity Committee, 57 Inman St., Cambridge 02139 or call 498-9076.

-Remember to RECYCLE !!!

Feb 10 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

- Glass bottles-cleaned, with caps and rings removed
 - Newspaper-no junk mail or magazines
 - Aluminum returnable cans and aluminum foil
- For information call 498-9078.



Special Cultural Programs

BALDWIN HALL TO BE REDEDICATED TO MARIA BALDWIN
The Agassiz School and the Agassiz Neighborhood Council have collaborated to bring the community a week long celebration from March 11 through 17th honoring the life of Miss Maria Louise Baldwin (1856-1922). Miss Baldwin was born and educated in Cambridge. She came to Agassiz as a teacher in 1882, and she was appointed the first black female school master in all New England over 100 years ago in 1889 by the Cambridge School Committee. Her tenure at Agassiz spanned 40 years, and at her death in 1922 the school auditorium was named Baldwin Hall and dedicated in her honor.

Miss Baldwin was a remarkable woman, best known for her accomplishments as an educator. Many Harvard professors sent their children to Agassiz because she was principal, most notably the father of e.e. cummings. cummings eventually wrote about Miss Baldwin in SIX NONLECTURES.

Miss Baldwin had many accomplishments in the Cambridge school system at Agassiz. She organized the first PTA in Cambridge, introduced new math teaching methods, had the first trained nurse in the school system, began a museum of science in the school, and gained support for a new Agassiz School building, which was built to replace the old Agassiz in 1915.

Less documented is Miss Baldwin's relationship with the black community in Cambridge and Boston. She held weekly reading classes in her home on Prospect St. for black students who attended Harvard, one of whom was WEB DuBois. He later wrote about her in *The Crisis*, the NAACP Journal, April 1922: "She fought domestic troubles and the bitter never-ending insults of race difference. But she emerged always the quiet, well-bred lady, the fine and lovely Woman. She died a teacher, teaching men women and children; and how strange a mockery of our democracy it is that most Americans are chiefly interested to know that her pupils, the thousands of public school pupils, were white Massachusetts school children."

Miss Baldwin also shared her knowledge and expertise with the black community during many summers when she taught at the Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia. An article written by Miss Baldwin was published in *The Southern Workman and Hampton School Record* in January 1900. She also taught summer school at the Institute for Colored Youth in Cheyney, Pennsylvania.

Miss Baldwin addressed the Brooklyn Institute in 1897. Her topic was the Life and Service of the late Harriet Beecher Stowe. The *Cambridge Chronicle* of March 6, 1897 reports that "Miss Maria L. Baldwin, principal of the Agassiz School of this city delivered the Annual Washington's Birthday Address before the Brooklyn Institute. This was the first

time in the history of the institute that the Annual address was given by a woman. That it should be a colored woman is all the more remarkable."

Miss Baldwin died addressing an audience of the Robert Gould Shaw House. When she died Miss Baldwin was president of the League of Women for Community Service. It still exists at 558 Mass. Ave. in Boston, and it is one of Boston's oldest service organizations. It is housed in the Falwell Mansion, a stop on the underground railroad, and the league is dedicated to educational and charitable programs for Boston's citizens of color. Miss Baldwin was a founder of that organization.

At her memorial service Dr. Charles W. Eliot, president emeritus of Harvard said "... the life of Maria Baldwin was unique. I know of no other case where a woman from an obscure beginning rose to the head of the best grammar school in the city system serving the children of all races. . . All that has been said of her poise and charm is true."

The March Celebration will include school curriculum items such as a spelling bee, elocution contest, popular games of the time, music and costumes. In the community there will be a gallery event depicting 100 years of Cambridge and Boston African-Americans in photographs, a community art workshop to help design the portion of a community mural depicting Miss Baldwin.

The Rededication of Baldwin Hall will be held in Agassiz School on Thursday, March 15 in the evening. Awards will be given, Baldwin Scholarship recipients from 1922 to present will be honored, monologues and singing will be performed by Agassiz students, and the play "Miss Baldwin of Agassiz" [See Lelsey College News and Events] will be performed.

FOR INFORMATION ON THE REDEDICATION AND TO BE ON OUR MAILING LIST, call the council office at 498-9056.

Free Community Art Workshops

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council will be sponsoring a series of free community art workshops to help design the mural, which will be created by artist Wen-Ti Tsen this spring. The workshops will be run by Agassiz After school art specialist Rich Curran.

Workshops will be held on Saturday February 17, March 3, and March 17 from 10 a.m. to noon. You can attend them all or just one. All members of the community, whether you work, attend school or live in the neighborhood; all ages adults and children, are welcome. Rich Curran, in collaboration with mural artist Wen-Ti Tsen will plan separate themes with various art media for each workshop. You don't need to be an artist, just come with all your creative energy. Meet at the Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento St. (Parents should be prepared to supervise young children)

To have a flyer and more specific information sent to you, please call 498-9056.

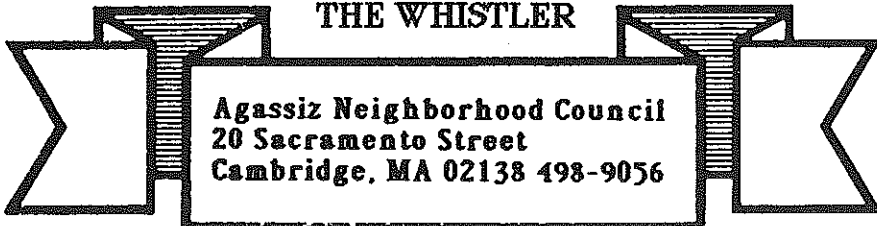


Community Calendar

February COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- 2/7 Wednesday..... School half day, Afterschool opens 12:45 p.m.
- 2/10 Saturday..... Recycling at 147 Hampshire, Sherman St. behind St. Peter's Field 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Every 2nd Sat. For info call 498-9078.
- 2/14 Wednesday..... Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting 7:30 p.m. 20 Sacramento St. -agenda pg 1
- 2/17 Saturday..... Community Mural Design Workshop 10 am-Noon, Free-Meet at 20 Sacramento St. (see article)
- 2/19 Monday..... First day of February Vacation Week
- 3/3 Saturday..... Community Mural Design Workshop 10 am-Noon, Free-Meet at 20 Sacramento St. (see article)
- 3/5 Monday..... "Miss Baldwin of Agassiz" to be presented in Welch Auditorium, Lesley College 7 p.m. Free (see Lesley College News and Events)

THE WHISTLER



**Agassiz Neighborhood Council
20 Sacramento Street
Cambridge, MA 02138 498-9056**

February 1990