




The Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

ATTENTION RESIDENTS OUTSIDE THE AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD: This edition of our Newsletter is being sent to everyone who has expressed interest in Porter Square Development in order to keep you up to date on all important events.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Porter Square Development Update

Thanks to good coverage in both the Cambridge Chronicle and the Cambridge Tab, most residents are aware of the scope (12 movie theatres, 6 restaurants, 33+ retail stores and a car rental business) of the proposed development in Porter Square, one on the Sears Site, the other next to the Porter Square Shopping Center.

Residents are also aware of the implications of such proposals, and they turned out in record numbers to a series of important April meetings.

In March a committee with questions from the Agassiz Neighborhood Council met with City Manager Robert Healy who agreed to assemble his division heads from traffic, building, licensing and community development at a meeting on April 9 to answer questions regarding the city's role in the development of the former Sears site.

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council's attendance sheets show that 433 people signed into the April 9 meeting. Residents concerns included traffic congestion, lack of parking, and safety and the kind of traffic study that would be done. Would it include


(cont. pg 2)

Donations for Mailings-Porter Square Development

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council has gladly taken on the responsibility of mailing information out to all interested residents. However, this is an expensive task, and we would appreciate any small donation to defray the cost of postage and printing.

We have collected enough money to cover the last mailing already. Please help us with future expenses. We will keep the information coming !

MASS. AVE. DRIVE-IN: AN EVENT



Mark your calendar for Saturday afternoon May 17. We are planning an event to highlight the reality of our concern over the traffic which will be generated by the proposed developments in Porter Square.

Our plan is to have --we hope-- 400 cars attempt to converge on Porter Square at 5:00 P.M. on Saturday May 17. If enough of us participate, we can demonstrate the impact which these projects will have.

We are preparing specific plans for this event. Everyone who participates will be given a large number to display on his or her car. If car #243 can't get beyond the intersection of Walden Street and Mass. Ave., or Garfield St. and Oxford St., people ... including city officials and, possibly, developers...will understand our concerns.

Please set this time aside to join the demonstration. (In the 80's we demonstrate in our cars.) It promises to be an interesting and fun occasion. The event will only work if a sufficient number of people participate.

Call the Agassiz Neighborhood Council number after 6 PM and a taped message will give you instructions. If you have questions please call before 6 PM, and a human will answer. Please call soon so that we will be able to plan appropriately.

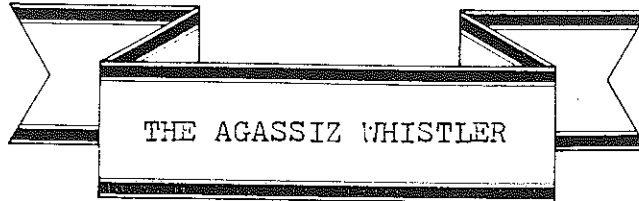


next council meeting...

Wednesday May 14
7:30 P.M.

Traffic and Safety Issues in Agassiz
1986-87 Council Budget

20 Sacramento Street
Agassiz Community Center



Porter Square cont.



traffic on the side streets? Other concerns included the cost to Cambridge for added services, the reality that this kind of development would attract people from afar into a residential neighborhood, and the reputation of the developer in light of other Cambridge projects.

At that meeting residents learned that the most important role would be held by the Licensing Commission for it is within their power to grant both theatre and liquor licenses.

James McDavitt, License Commissioner, explained that the licensing hearing set for April 22 would be the time when residents could have input into the process of granting licenses. Liquor licenses are granted to restaurants on the basis of "public need" and are granted only if they do not detract from the "common good". Theatre licenses can be denied if residents can prove that the theatres will "unreasonably increase the traffic flow, pedestrian traffic, disruption and noise: Mc Davitt stated that personal perceptions are relevant evidence to the issue.

Meanwhile the City Council was presented with a petition signed by several hundred residents concerned with the scope of such a development in their neighborhood. The City Council listened and held their own hearing on April 14 regarding the Sears Development. Wasserman presented his plans to a packed house. Residents commented again overwhelmingly against this development. The City Council passed a recommendation to deny licenses in a non binding vote. Also the City Council recommended that the developer work with a citizen's group to be appointed by City Manager Robert Healy.

At the April 22 Licensing Hearing 300 residents again packed the hall and ample testimony was made to prove that the development would turn an already congested neighborhood into a nightmare of no parking, traffic jams and pedestrian danger.

Petitions were presented by Wasserman in favor of restaurants in Porter Square. They were not, however, circulated in the neighborhoods that would be impacted.

Residents have spoken. What remains to be filed is a traffic report which will be done for the city by Norman Abend. This report is due on May 27. Residents and developers have until MAY 27th to submit any written testimony to the License Commission located in City Hall.

After May 27, the traffic study will be available to the public, and another hearing will be held in June in response to the traffic study report.

As of this writing, Commissioner McDavitt did not have a firm date for the June hearing regarding the traffic study report. Normally a hearing is set for two weeks after all information is received, but due to the fact that several people have requested an extension, the date remains unset. Look for the date in the June "Whistler" or in the local newspapers, and keep in mind that the **FINAL DECISION ON LICENSES WILL BE MADE ON JULY 8.**



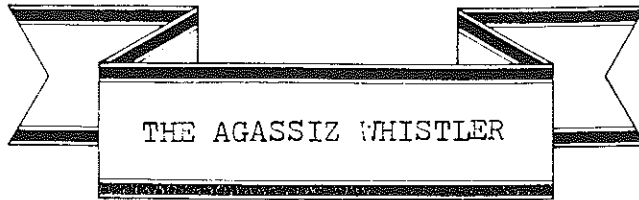
Legal Help With Porter Square Development

A suggestion has been made that a lawyer be retained to monitor all development in the Porter Square Area. Naturally this will require that capital be raised. If you are interested in this idea or would like more information, contact Steve Hantman at 542-3000 or 354-5118.



Liquor Cap on Mass. Ave.

At the Licensing Hearing on April 22 at 5:30, the liquor cap was discussed. Several residents spoke in favor of the cap, which will prohibit the creation of any new liquor licenses on the stretch of Mass. Ave. between Porter Square and the Cambridge Common. Alice Wolf and Frank Duehay, City Councillors also spoke in favor of the cap. In addition, petitions with over 300 names were submitted favoring a liquor cap. There was no opposition to the cap present at the meeting. A decision whether to cap the area will be made at the next licensing meeting in two weeks.



Mass. Ave. Rezoning

The formal petition to rezone Mass. Ave. from the Cambridge Common to Arlington should be filed soon. The petition was prepared by the city's Community Development Department working with its consultant and the North Mass. Ave. Advisory Committee.

This rezoning process is an outgrowth of our efforts of a year ago to downzone Mass. Ave. Our petition, the so-called Larose petition, failed because there was not enough vocal community support for it.

The new petition represents a compromise between business and residential interests. While it does not reduce potential development as much as last year's effort, it is comparable in many respects, and it is a vast improvement over current zoning.

This petition will require the vote of the City Council. It will require 6 votes (7 if owners of 20% of the affected land object. The key to getting the city council vote is to contact city councillors in person. Call them. Write them. Visit them. We expect that the final city council vote will occur some time in mid or late June. However, due to unexpected delays as the "Whistler" went to print, it is unclear if the deadline will be met. The process begins with a hearing of the Planning Board and the City Council's Ordinance Committee. Check local newspapers for the dates of those hearings.

For more information, call Betty Desrosiers at the Cambridge Community Development Department (498-9034)

The Agassiz Reading Series Rides Again

The Agassiz Reading Series is run by the community for the community and through the community. It expects, wants and needs community attention ! The series has had POETS, PHILOSOPHERS, PLAYWRIGHTS, NOVELISTS, ART CRITICS, HISTORIANS, ARCHITECTS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, and thinker/performers of every sort.

The aim and intention of the series is provide you, the audience, with entertainment and to be a part of work in progress. The performers get deadlines that help get work done, and audience, and most important of all, a chance for instant feedback. We structure the evening so that after the performance

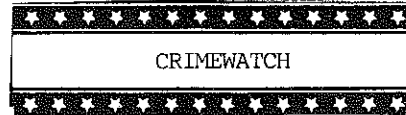
the audience can meet and talk with the performers in a relaxed atmosphere with refreshments provided by the Neighborhood Council. The audience is encouraged to let the performer know how they felt about the work and to hear how others reacted.

We are constantly looking for new talent to perform and new faces in the audience. If you want to be a part of it, watch the calendar that is always in the "Whistler" and come see how it works-its free and right around the corner on your very doorstep. We have upcoming readings running through June 23 and will start again in September: watch for the thrilling fall season, a cultural bouquet from your neighborhood council.

Agassiz Neighborhood Council Budget

The council is currently preparing the budget for fiscal year 1986-87 which will begin on July 1.

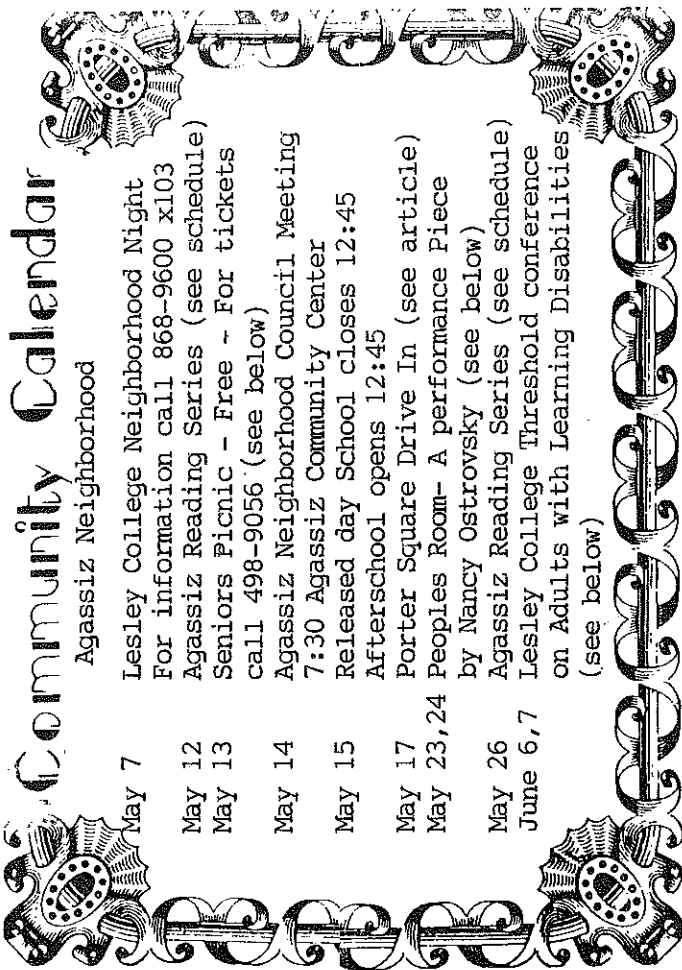
Come to the May 14 council meeting if you are interested in the draft budget. The final budget will be presented at the June council meeting.



Violent crimes have escalated in our neighborhood in the past few months. In April's Crime Statistics, there were two ARMED ROBBERIES, one on Wendell Street, the other at the Oxford Spa. This is a place that almost anyone in the neighborhood could have walked into as it was being robbed. The Cambridge Police have advised us that this was the third such armed robbery in the Harvard Square area at a small store, and the police are covering all such stores in the area in unmarked patrols around closing time.

The owners of the Oxford Spa have proven to be good neighbors through twice sponsoring the "Whistler" and through a commitment to help our children's programs through scholarships. Come to our next council meeting on MAY 14 when we will discuss the crime problem, and we will try to come up with some solutions.

Other crimes include 2 unarmed robberies on Garfield and Oxford, 4 break ins on Prentiss, Museum, Mass. Ave. and Everett, 9 incidents of malicious destruction of property, 3 on Eustis St., 3 on Oxford Street, and one each on Gorham, Mass. Ave. and Everett. There were several incidents of larceny under \$100., and larceny from cars on Oxford, Mellen, Mass. Ave., and Gorham Streets.



Community Calendar

Agassiz Neighborhood

- May 7 Lesley College Neighborhood Night
For information call 868-9600 x103
- May 12 Agassiz Reading Series (see schedule)
- May 13 Seniors Picnic - Free - For tickets
call 498-9056 (see below)
- May 14 Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting
7:30 Agassiz Community Center
- May 15 Released day School closes 12:45
Afterschool opens 12:45
- May 17 Porter Square Drive In (see article)
- May 23,24 Peoples Room- A performance Piece
by Nancy Ostrovsky (see below)
- May 26 Agassiz Reading Series (see schedule)
- June 6,7 Lesley College Threshold conference
on Adults with Learning Disabilities
(see below)

"THE WHISTLER"
Agassiz Neighborhood Council
20 Sacramento Street
Cambridge, MA 02138 498-9056

COMMUNITY INTEREST

Lesley College Threshold Conference The second annual conference: "Toward Independence: Issues for Parents of Adults with Learning Disabilities" will be held this year on the Lesley college campus on June 6 and 7. Two reduced fee registrations are available to members of the Agassiz Community. Call 491-3739.

Golden Age Week Walter Sullivan Mayor of Cambridge invites all Senior Citizens to an Annual Picnic at the M.I.T. Skating Arena from 11 AM-3:30 PM for lunch and entertainment. For free tickets call 498-9056

Peoples Room Nancy Ostrovsky is collaborating in a performance piece based on her 1984 painting PEOPLES ROOM. It will feature choreographer JerylAnn Owens, music by Joe Morris and 10 dancers. Nancy will be painting live in the performance and also has done the sets, costuming. It is the last major performance in this area before her move to New York State. It will be held at the Joy of Movement Center, 536 Mass. Ave. Cambridge, Friday May 23 and Saturday May 24 at 8 PM. For reservations call 742-5278, Tickets \$7.

Sweats Childrens sweatshirts hand painted with original designs by Nancy Ostrovsky. Some in stock or special order. A percent will go to Agassiz Afterschool as a donation. Call 498-0595.