

# the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

April 2012

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## ANC News

### NOTES FROM THE MAR. 13 MEETING

#### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation in Cambridge**

##### **Transportation Planning**

"Street design has an implication for our social lives," stated Cara Seiderman, Project Planner with Cambridge Community Development (CCD). "Traffic has been shown to have an impact on whether people get to know their neighbors. Slower traffic, walking, and biking encourage street vitality and support local economy. Also, where streets are more "walkable," residents in engage in seventy more minutes of physical activity per day."

Ms. Seiderman provided an overview of city policies and guidelines surrounding sustainable growth, including:

- Sidewalk design and road crossings
- Road signal policies (such as reducing right-on-red turns and pedestrian crossing signals with count-downs)

- Bike lanes
- Incorporating measures that support biking and walking in plans for street reconstruction projects

Because streets that are straight, wide, and open see more problems with speeding vehicles, the city employs "traffic calming" measures, such as curb extensions and raised intersections, as well as "road diets" where the number of lanes on a street is reduced to slow traffic and provide more substantial walking and biking options. Two examples of this are the trimming of motor vehicle lanes along Mass. Ave. in Central Square in favor of wider sidewalks and bike lanes, and Winthrop St. in Harvard Square, which permits motor vehicles only on a limited basis.

##### **Bicycle Safety and Amenities**

"From 2002 to 2010 we saw an almost 150% increase in bike trips," stated Ms. Seiderman. "Our vision is that bikes have comfortable access to every street in Cambridge."

The city employs practices to support riders, ranging from people very comfortable with urban biking to those who are "interested but concerned." This includes teaching bicycle

### NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



**APR. 10 - 7:30 PM**

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

- **2012/2013 ABC Board Slate**
- **Cambridge Police Department Yearly Update**
- **Discussion of Zoning Variance for Proposed Dunkin Donuts at 1678 Mass. Ave.**

safety in Cambridge Public Schools, bike lanes, cycle tracks (off-road bike lanes), increased bicycle parking, and Bike Fixit Stands providing tools and tire pumps installed in public locations.

According to Ms. Seiderman, although on-road bike lanes can be controversial (less than previously, as more people utilize them), the city installs the lanes because studies have shown that with lanes, motorists and cyclists are more safely positioned, more people are encouraged to bike, many riders prefer them, and motorists are more likely to notice bikes within marked lanes. Currently, the city is participating in a study using different bike markings, including shared lane markings (called “sharrows”) to determine which have the desired effects.

The city also has an active Bicycle Committee, made up of community members and city staff, and organizes several tours per year. The next ride, the String Theory Bike Tour, is scheduled for Saturday, May 19, 2012. Learn more online at: [bit.ly/cambridge-bike-events](http://bit.ly/cambridge-bike-events).

### **Cambridge Police Department Bike Patrols**

Joining the discussion were Cambridge Police Officers Dan Burroso and Matt Mahoney. They updated the Council about the Cambridge Police Department Bicycle Patrol Unit, as well as reviewed rules of the road, which apply to bikes the same as to motor vehicles.

“We have a lot more officers riding. On bike, we’re able to communicate more with the public face-to-face,” stated Officer Burroso. “Also, we stop and ticket riders who run red lights or ride on major streets’ sidewalks.”

The state has instituted a \$100 fine for motor vehicle drivers who strike riders with car doors, and riders who don’t have lights for night use can incur a \$20 fine.

### **Help By Reporting Potholes**

Cambridge residents can help the city repair

potholes and broken sidewalks with iReport. This app, download-able to smart phones, can be used to send photos and GPS locations.

Learn more at:

[www.cambridgema.gov/ireport.aspx](http://www.cambridgema.gov/ireport.aspx).

Learn more about the Cambridge Bicycle Program at:

[www.2.cambridgema.gov/cdd/et/bike](http://www.2.cambridgema.gov/cdd/et/bike).

### **Upcoming Cambridge Street Tunnel/Overpass Repairs**

Tom Lucey, Harvard University Director of Community Relations, and Owen O’Riordan, Cambridge City Engineer, provided details for upcoming work on the Cambridge Street Tunnel.

Built in the 1960s, the tunnel and overpass have not seen major repairs in many years. Working together, Harvard will reconstruct the overpass and the city will rebuild the walls, ceiling, and floor of the tunnel. Construction is set to begin this summer and occur simultaneously.

### **Overpass**

The overpass will receive a new surface and water-proofing. Construction is expected to begin in the spring, and halt a few weeks before commencement, with the goal of completing the project before fall 2012.

Mr. Lucey stated, “We’re aware of the importance of the surface area to pedestrian and bicycle traffic. We’re committed to keeping a pathway open throughout construction.”



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### **Tunnel**

The city expects to begin work on the tunnel in late summer 2012, with projected completion in spring 2013. The repairs will be significant and include:

- Reinforcing the steel
- A new lighting system
- A new tunnel floor

Mr. O’Riordan told the Council, “We expect the work to be very noisy because we will need to grind the existing concrete roadway to remove it. We hope to get the work done as quickly as possible during the fall, beginning in September or October.”

Traffic will be disrupted by one lane in east-bound and northbound construction, and the tunnel will be closed two weekends in total.

### **Q&A**

- Q:** Will there will detours for bikes as well as for pedestrians?
- A:** Yes. Additionally, the city is looking at improving the underpass by installing bike lanes. Bikes, of course, can continue to use the Cambridge Street overpass.
- Q:** Will cars still be able to park on Quincy St.?
- A:** There are no plans to remove parking.
- Q:** Where will the farmers’ market be relocated?
- A:** The farmers’ market may be temporarily moved in front of the museums on Oxford Street. Harvard views reconstruction of the overpass as an opportunity for improved programming for the university and community. Currently, food trucks, a farmers’ market, and a new ice skating rink share the space, appropriate to the season.

### **Stay Informed**

Learn more by visiting Harvard’s construction mitigation website at:  
[www.construction.harvard.edu](http://www.construction.harvard.edu).

### **Neighbors Discuss Zoning Variance for 1678 Mass. Ave.**

Dennis Carlone, architect/urban designer, former consultant to the city for thirty years, and Neighborhood 9 resident, initiated a discussion about the process taken for a proposed new Dunkin Donuts coffee shop at 1678 Mass. Ave.

Neighbors had been unaware of a pending application for a fast food variance at that site because the sign posted to the window listed the term “café/coffee house,” and an unexplained selection of numbers related to zoning.

The discussion covered:

- Neighbors expressed displeasure with how they learned of the application, and were equally frustrated by not having sufficient opportunity to respond
- Concern that the vitality of local independent stores could be threatened by the presence of another national chain, particularly when the number of nearby stores selling coffee, and Dunkin Donuts locations in Harvard and Porter Squares, is taken into account
- Issues with potential increased double parking
- Inviting the owner of the proposed store to attend an upcoming ANC meeting, to permit the Council to make an more informed decision about whether the store is a good fit for the neighborhood

The Council voted unanimously to support a motion whereby ANC send a letter to the Board of Zoning Appeal, and to other appropriate city departments, expressing the Council’s concerns, especially the city’s process.

### **Get Involved**

Interested parties should attend the next hearing of the Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeal on **Thursday, April 12**, which will include a continuation of the review of the zoning variance for 1678 Mass. Ave. Public comment may be permitted.

**What:** BZA Hearing  
**When:** Thursday, April 12,  
 7:00-11:30 PM  
**Where:** Citywide Senior Center,  
 806 Mass. Ave.  
**Contact:** (617) 349-6100

**Mass. Ave. Master Plan Update**

The first draft of the Mass. Ave. Streetscape Master Plan and Public Development Standards, a collaboration between residents and city departments to improve Mass. Ave. between the Cambridge Common and Porter Square, is being updated with a target of mid-April completion.

The working group is finalizing the standards, including:

- More crosswalks
- Sidewalk pavement materials
- Tree grates
- Plantings on the median strip near the Cambridge Common and proposed new Art Institute of Boston
- Art and history themes
- Additional support for biking and walking

The final plans will be presented at public open houses in May.



# Community

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## 2012/2013 ABC BOARD SLATE

The following officers and directors (below) seek to renew their positions on the Agassiz Baldwin Community Board for 2012/2013.

The Board Slate will announced at the April 10th Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting, and accepted by a vote of the Council at the May 8th Annual Meeting.

Officers for a one-year term:

- Andrea Walsh, Co-Chair, Eustis St.
- Miriam Goldberg, Co-Chair, Frost St.
- Hull Fulweiler, Clerk, Howland St.

Gao Wen Shao, Treasurer, Fayette St.

Directors for a two-year term:  
 Anna Eckert Byrne, Kirkland St.  
 Fred Meyer, Hammond St.

2012 Nominating Committee

- Joel Bard
- Willie Bloomstein
- Terry DeLancey

The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for the Board; specifically those with expertise in law, finance, representatives of local businesses, and people with children in ABC programs.

Candidates should send a statement that explains their interest in the board as well as relevant experience and a resumé (optional) to [tdelancey@agassiz.org](mailto:tdelancey@agassiz.org) or Agassiz Baldwin Community, Attn: ABC Nominating Committee, 20 Sacramento Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.



# Maud Morgan Arts

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## HELP BUILD "FORT AGASSIZ" PLAY STRUCTURE

During February Vacation week at Maud Morgan Arts, a dedicated and enthusiastic group of middle school students researched, designed, and built a model of a play structure to be constructed in the backyard of 20 Sacramento Street. "Fort Agassiz" will be a fun and important addition to the play options for all participants in Agassiz Baldwin Children's Programs.

The second phase of this project includes another workshop for middle school students during April Vacation week, where participants will build and install the railings and some of the other add-on components. Additionally, we will break ground for the footings and start framing the structure during the first week of April.

Our budget at this early phase is very limited so we are asking for contributions, specifically if you have a backyard play structure that is no longer in use with components that are still in good shape. We are looking for both a slide and a ladder.

To contribute, contact Phoebe Sinclair at [psinclair@agassiz.org](mailto:psinclair@agassiz.org) or (617) 349-6287 x10.



Students unveil play structure project



Model of "Fort Agassiz," to be constructed behind 20 Sacramento

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SURVEY AND WORLD CAFE

Via City of Cambridge Website

The City of Cambridge will host its first World Café focused on Information Technology on **Thursday, May 10, from 6-8:30 PM**, at Cambridge Rindge & Latin School, Pearl K. Wise Library, 459 Broadway.



The objective of the IT World Café is to engage the public in discussion about Information Technology and use the input to help shape the City's Technology priorities and plans for the future.

Recent Cambridge Technological Innovations:

- iReport citizen mobile reporting app for iOS and Android devices
- MyPD public safety mobile app for iOS and Android devices
- New City, Library, Police, and Public Works websites
- Language translation for the City website
- Cambridge Alert Network emergency notification system

Complete the city's online survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/worldcafesurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/worldcafesurvey) to help define areas of greatest interest. The survey deadline is April 20.

## City Wide

### STREET SWEEPING BEGINS

This spring, street cleaning in Cambridge will resume on **Monday, April 2**. Be sure to check signs for parking restrictions between April and December to avoid being ticketed and/or towed. Get the schedule and learn more online at: [www.cambridgema.gov/theworks](http://www.cambridgema.gov/theworks).



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# Community Calendar

## April 2012

Friday, April 6		Good Friday holiday, ABC School Programs closed
Tuesday, April 10	7:30-9:00 PM	ANC Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento St., 2D Studio All are welcome
Wednesday, April 11	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St, 2nd Floor Public welcome

The Whistler is published monthly September - June by the Agassiz Baldwin Community, distribution 2,000. Call (617) 349-6287 to receive by mail or e-mail. The newsletter is also posted each month online at [www.agassiz.org](http://www.agassiz.org). Items of interest to the neighborhood may be submitted for consideration no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication date.

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