

# the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

September 2012

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## ANC News

### NOTES FROM THE JUNE 12 MEETING

#### **Cambridge Innovation Agenda**

Maria L. Baldwin School Principal Nicholas Leonardos joined the Council to discuss the Innovation Agenda, a Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) initiative that, beginning September 2012, will create an Upper School program for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students.

“Cambridge has had a history of being a loose confederation of schools –almost like twelve united charter schools,” stated Principal Leonardos. “This reorganization will be a historic change for our district. We’re trying to raise the bar for all students, as well as provide middle school students with better enrichment opportunities.”

Principal Leonardos provided an overview of the Agenda, which can be found in the document, “The Innovation Agenda, A Design for Excellence in Cambridge Public Schools,” available online at [bit.ly/revised-innovation-agenda](http://bit.ly/revised-innovation-agenda).

1. To provide all Cambridge Public School students with a superior academic and social experience in their elementary and middle grade years that raises student achievement, eliminates achievement gaps, and develops 21st century skills
2. To build a grade 6-12 pathway that ensures all Cambridge Public School students are well prepared for academic and social success in high school and post-secondary education
3. To provide all students in special populations, such as special needs students and English language learners, with the same quality school experience provided to other students
4. To expand professional development and collaboration opportunities for Cambridge Public Schools educators, improving educators’ experience and quality
5. To ensure that Cambridge Public Schools facilities fully support the expectations and demands of the academic programs
6. To ensure that the Cambridge Public Schools makes the best and most efficient use of resources in providing superior service to students.

### NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



**SEPTEMBER 12 - 7:30 PM**

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

#### **Agenda**

- **Lesley University Updates on Art Institute of Boston (AIB)**
- **Mass. Ave. Master Plan Progress**
- **Residents report on their experience of the Innovation Agenda/Cambridge Public Schools Reorganization**

**Upper School Program**

The new Upper Schools will be located in existing buildings on four of the larger campuses in the city.

**Cambridge Street Upper Campus:**

- Located in the King Open School building
- Brings together middle school students from existing schools:
  - Cambridgeport
  - Fletcher-Maynard
  - King Open

**Rindge Avenue Upper Campus:**

- Located in the Peabody School building
- Brings together middle school students from existing schools:
  - Baldwin
  - Peabody

**Putnam Ave. Upper Campus:**

- Temporarily relocated to the Kennedy-Longfellow School building while the Putnam Ave. site undergoes construction
- Brings together middle school students from existing schools:
  - Kennedy-Longfellow
  - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
  - Morse

**Vassal Lane Upper Campus:**

- Located in the Tobin School building
- Brings together middle school students from existing schools:
  - Graham & Parks
  - Haggerty
  - Tobin

**In addition:**

- The Amigos School will remain a K-8 due to their Spanish language immersion program, and relocate to Upton Street
- Each elementary school will remain sized at approximately 288 students

**Changes at Baldwin**

In the Baldwin School building, 80-85% of

classrooms will move:

- 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes will relocate to the Rindge Avenue Upper Campus
- Some 3rd and 4th grade classes will move up a floor in the building
- The school will welcome a new special education class and three preschool classes

Principal Leonardos concluded, “We’re going to miss the middle school students. In many ways, they’ve been the leaders at our school. We’re hopeful that this change will provide an opportunity to focus on K-5 and do a even better job with those grades.”

**Community Response**

Community members discussed the Innovation Agenda’s potential benefits and drawbacks.

In response to the Principal’s presentation, State Representative Alice Wolf warned, “There is danger in trying to take a cookie cutter approach to education. Your description of the current system as competitive is an interesting analysis in light of the fact that the current thinking indicates that giving families the opportunity to choose improves school quality.”

Kate Frank, long-time Agassiz resident, stated, “These corrections [to the system] are coming after an earlier set of corrections, which turned out to look nothing like what we wanted. The differences in school quality are, in part, affected by a lack of resources outside of school. I hope that people will not be judged disloyal if they raise the looking glasses and wonder if you’re accomplishing what you think you are.”

A number of Council members expressed concern about how the changes might affect the culture of the greater school-age community.

Gao-Wen Shao, ABC Board Director and Baldwin parent, stated, “Agassiz Baldwin Community might be able to help keep upper grade students in the community through its Teachers-in-Training and Counselors-in-

Training programs, where teens volunteer as junior teachers.”

Maria Laine, Director of Children’s Programs at ABC, agreed, “For us, it’s great to get those kids back as TNTs or CITS. I think it’s important that there are still opportunities for kids to be role models for younger children. I don’t want to lose that with the changes.”

**Q&A**

**Q:** How will the district approach foreign language instruction?

**A:** King will continue with Mandarin Chinese. At all of the other campuses, students will have a choice between Spanish and French at the Upper School Level. At the elementary level, foreign language instruction will cease for a year while CPS develops a more purposeful plan.

**Q:** Who will run the preschools? Is there a need for them?

**A:** The preschools will be operated by the Office of Special Education’s Special Start Program. This does not represent a greater need for preschool, so much as classes being moved around in connection with the Innovation Agenda.

**Cambridge Police Review & Advisory Board**

The Cambridge Police Review & Advisory Board was established in 1984 to review Police Department policies, practices, and procedures; to provide impartial and fair investigations of complaints; to develop programs and strategies to promote positive police/community relations; and to provide opportunities for expanded dialogue.

Comprised of five members who are representative of the City’s racial, social, and economic composition, the Board generally meets on the last Wednesday of each month. Meetings are held at 6 PM at 51 Inman Street, Second Floor Conference Room, and are open to the public.

**Filing a Complaint**

The Board reviews complaints from the community, including:

- Excessive use of force
- Use of discourteous or demeaning language
- Improper stop, arrest, search, and seizure
- Inadequate investigation or improper police reports
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Improper police procedures
- Improper traffic citation or towing of a car by the police

Complaints must be filed within sixty days of an incident and can be submitted by mail, email, or in person. Investigations are conducted by the Professional Standards Unit of the Police Department.

“The Board doesn’t get many complaints, which is a testament to the Police Department,” stated K. Muna Kangsten, Project Coordinator. “However, we worry that part of the issue is that people don’t know this resource exists.”

**Q&A**

**Q:** What is the make up of the Board?

**A:** This civilian review board is made up of Cambridge residents (no police officers,) and meetings always have representation by the Professional Standards Unit.

**Q:** Does the Board set policy for the Police Department?

**A:** The Board can make policy recommendations. It is empowered to listen to and talk to the community.

**Community Response**

The Council voted to ask the Police Review and Advisory Board to consider two policy changes:

- The Police should notify all residents of an apartment building, or the abutters to a house, in the event of a housebreak.

- Consider creative investigation options (e.g., investigating stolen property that is being advertised online, etc.)

### **Art Institute of Boston Update**

Bill Doncaster, Director of Community Relations at Lesley University, provided an update on relocating the Art Institute of Boston to Cambridge at the site of the North Prospect Church, now owned by Lesley University. Mr. Doncaster explained that no substantive changes have been made to plans discussed at earlier Council meetings.

Bruner/Cott, the architectural firm hired by Lesley, has designed uses for the existing church, as well as for a proposed new building and a structure that adjoins the two at the rear of the property.

The North Prospect Church will be moved south of its current location on the lot, and placed upon a new foundation.

- Inside the church, the sanctuary will stay largely intact with the main body becoming a library (some public access permitted)
- The exterior of the church will be renovated, including a new steeple
- Some trees will be removed from the rear of the property
- New trees will be planted along Roseland St.

Construction could begin this fall or next spring. Work hours will be Monday through Friday, from 7 AM to 6 PM. During construction, all truck deliveries will occur on Mass. Ave. There will be minimal truck activity on Roseland St.

Parking will be provided for the construction management team, and other workers encouraged to take public transportation. As part of construction mitigation, the University will practice noise and odor control, as well as work with an arborist to protect trees.

Although there are three lawsuits associated

with the project (pertaining to zoning, the special permit, and historic designation) the University is proceeding with the design and preparing for construction. Lesley has prevailed on all three cases, which are currently in appeal.

### **Next Steps**

Architectural teams are working with city departments, and Lesley is in the process of submitting the construction management plan to the city. As the project gets closer, neighborhood groups will be provided with information.

### **Art Institute of Boston 100th Anniversary**

In celebration of AIB's 100th anniversary this fall, a faculty member is organizing art displays in the windows of area businesses on Mass. Ave. Stay tuned for more information in the fall.

**Note:** Visit Lesley's website at [bit.ly/lesley\\_porter\\_square\\_info](http://bit.ly/lesley_porter_square_info), or read the following editions of The Whistler newsletter at [www.agassiz.org](http://www.agassiz.org):

- 2006 January, February, April, May, September
- 2007 April, May, December
- 2008 October, December
- 2009 February, March, April, September, November
- 2010 April, May, November
- 2011 February, March
- 2011 September

### **Proposed New Development at Garfield St. and Mass. Ave.**

Stephen Diamond reported on a proposed new development at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Garfield St. Neighbors had been made aware of an advertisement by Boston Realty Advisors for development of the Gulf station property. A promotional rendering shows a building with ground floor commercial use and three stories of residential use above.

Mr. Diamond stated, "According to Junior Aziz,

the Gulf station's manager, the owner of the site, Cumberland Farms, has not promoted this development. Mr. Aziz has indicated that the owner of the Gulf Station franchise has the right to first refusal if the property were to be sold."

Council members discussed the site; many hoped the current use as a gas station would continue, others considered whether a building with mixed residential and retail use was desirable or viable.

**Mass. Ave. Master Plan Update**

Carol Weinhaus reported that residents and business owners from Agassiz and Neighborhood 9 working on the Mass. Ave. Master Plan for the past two and a half years are currently finalizing details with the City.

The City projects completion of the Master Plan by September 2012, followed by neighborhood presentations.



**Community**

**SCENES FROM A PLAY DAY**

Did you miss our annual Play Day, an all-agency open house featuring art demos, bocce, raffles, a student art sale, and more on Saturday, June 16?

Visit our Flickr page to see photos that we hope will inspire you to join us at next June's event: [bit.ly/play-day-2012](http://bit.ly/play-day-2012).



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**FAMILY & COMMUNITY BARBECUE  
POTLUCK 2012**

Join us at our annual Family & Community Barbecue Potluck on **Wednesday, September 19 from 5:30 to 7:00 PM.** Meet your neighbors, ABC



Children's Program families, and members of the Maria L. Baldwin School community, while sharing good food and enjoying our spacious backyard. **Everyone is welcome!**

Please bring a side dish, fruit, salad, dessert, drinks, or chips to share. ABC will supply hot-dogs, hamburgers, a veggie option, and drinks.

- Date:** Wednesday, September 19
- Time:** 5:30-7:00 PM
- Location:** 20 Sacramento Street, backyard
- Information:** (617) 349-6287 x10 or email [psinclair@agassiz.org](mailto:psinclair@agassiz.org)

Please remember that children must be accompanied by adults.

**REMEMBERING THE SUGAR MAPLE**

Stephen Diamond, ABC Board Director and ANC Meeting Chair, created a photo essay about an old sugar maple tree that died and was removed from behind 20 Sacramento Street. Check out the essay by visiting this webpage: [bit.ly/remembering-the-sugar-maple](http://bit.ly/remembering-the-sugar-maple).



# Community Calendar

## September 2012

Tuesday, September 11	7:30-9:00 PM	ANC Meeting, see page 1 for agenda Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento St., 2D Studio All are welcome
Wednesday, September 12	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St., 2nd Floor Public welcome
Wednesday, September 19	5:30-7:00 PM	ABC Family & Community Barbecue Potluck, 20 Sacramento St., back yard

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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**DO NOT FORWARD**