

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

May 2014

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ANC News

NOTES FROM APR. 8 MEETING

Special Community Meeting with Cambridge City Council

On Tuesday, April 8th, ANC hosted a special community meeting to discuss the state of the neighborhood and city. In attendance were members of the Agassiz Baldwin Board of Directors and the Agassiz Baldwin Advisory Committee, as well as special guests Councillors Dennis Carlone, Craig Kelley, Nadeem Mazen, Marc McGovern, and E. Denise Simmons.

The City Councillors introduced themselves, described what they're currently working on, and responded to questions compiled prior to the meeting. Topics ranged from supporting the vanishing middle and working class families, to fair housing, to public schools and education.

The formal portion of the evening concluded with a reception with light refreshments and the opportunity for residents to speak candidly with the Councillors.

Below find a summary of each Councillor's remarks:

E. Denise Simmons

Councillor Simmons stated, "In order to lead, you have to learn, that is listen. I work to set up situations where people can be heard. For



example, we have a group that meets in a hair salon. It's through these meetings that I hear about issues important to people. We're a city of neighborhoods. I'm interested in hearing from yours."

Committees: Councillor Simmons chairs the Housing Committee and the Civic Unity Committee, co-chairs the Economic Development & University Relations Committee, and serves on Ordinance; Finance; Government Operations, Rules & Claims; and Public Safety.

Key interests: affordable housing, development, jobs/employment, the changing face of Cambridge

Office Hours: 1st and 3rd Friday of each month, 9:00-11:00 AM, usually in the Sophie Room, Cambridge City Hall

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



MAY 13 - 7:30 PM

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

Annual Meeting

The Council will vote to approve the slate for the 2014/2015 ABC Board of Directors. All are invited to attend, meet the Board, and enjoy light refreshments.

Marc McGovern

Councillor McGovern, who as a child attended the Agassiz (now Baldwin) School, served eight years on the Cambridge School Committee and is new this year to City Council. He stated, "I'm proud to be part of the City Council; everyone brings something different. The culture on the council is one of mutual respect."

Committees: Councillor McGovern chairs the Finance Committee and Human Services & Veterans Committee, he serves on Ordinance; Government Operations, Rules & Claims; Housing; Economic Development & University Relations; Health & Environment; and Civic Unity.

Key interests: poverty, hunger, early childhood education, affordable housing, and diversity

Office hours: Mondays, 9:00-11:00 AM

Nadeem Mazen

Councillor Mazen moved to Cambridge twelve years ago to attend MIT. A portion of his salary pays a community organizer who helps to garner community interests and needs, and to disseminate opportunities for involvement. The Councillor described himself as "obsessed with how we teach and how we learn" and stated, "The questions of our age revolve around social and economic justice."

Committees: Councillor Mazen chairs the Neighborhood & Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts & Celebration Committee and serves on Ordinance; Finance; Government Operations, Rules & Claims; Housing; Economic Development & University Relations; Human



Services & Veterans, and Health & Environment.

Key interests: college/university support for public schools, data access, community organizing

Office hours: Weekdays, 12:00-2:00 PM, appointments available for other times, call (617) 349-4205

Dennis Carlone

Councillor Carlone has a background in urban design, served as a consultant to Lesley University, and worked on development with the East Cambridge community. He stated, "In every city, public spaces are the focal point. The more people and perspectives involved, the better a plan is."

Committees: Councillor Carlone co-chairs the Ordinance Committee, chairs Transportation & Public Utilities, and serves on Finance; Economic Development & University Relations; Health & Environment; Neighborhood & Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts & Celebration; and Public Safety.

Key interests: affordable housing

Craig Kelley

Councillor Kelley stated, " People from vastly different cultures can have difficulty connecting with one another. We need to have honest, sometimes uncomfortable, and frequent discussions. Each data point is a person and each person has a story."

Committees: Councillor Kelly chairs the Public Safety Committee and serves on Ordinance; Finance; Housing; Human Services & Veterans; and Transportation & Public Utilities.

Key interests: helping people stay in Cambridge, academic rigor, teacher training, school climate/classroom management

Office hours: contact Councillor Kelley at ckelley@cambridgema.gov

Community Questions Answered

Below, Councillors respond to questions collected from the community.

Q: How can we, as a community, help you, City Councillors, to support, attract and keep middle-income people in Cambridge, including families?

McGovern: When I was growing up, Cambridge was a community where teachers, fire fighters, police officers could afford to buy a home and raise a family. We are no longer that community and that hurts us. We need to build more middle income, family friendly housing that allows people making 100 to 120% of the medium income to qualify.

Too often the conversation becomes about building low-income housing OR middle income housing, I hope to change that “OR” to “AND” because we need both.

Q: What are plans for the old Three Aces Pizza/Bence Pharmacy site owned by Harvard?

McGovern: One of the tenants on the site was a dry cleaner and when Harvard started doing sub-surface inspections they found dry cleaning solvents below ground that required remediation.

Harvard said that this is an ongoing process and they cannot say at this time when it will be completed. They also indicated that there is a chance that the building will need to be demolished, although they won't make that decision until after the remediation is completed. They stated that they know the community wants ground level retail and before making any major decision they will engage in discussion with the community.

Q: Where can I get information about tenant rights?

Simmons: It is very important that tenants know their rights, and there are several places that Cambridge renters can look to for information. The Community Development Depart-

ment has a list of organizations that can answer renters' questions at bit.ly/camb-for-renters. Renters can also contact the Community Legal Services and Counseling Center for general inquiries at (617) 661-1010.

Another important website to turn to is bit.ly/tenants-rights. For issues where you are concerned about whether the building you live in is up to code, you may contact the City's Inspectional Services Department at (617) 349-6100.

Q: When, if ever, will Cambridge streets get fixed?

Simmons: This is a broad question, so unfortunately I must give a broad answer. The DPW has done a good job of scheduling street repairs and developing a multi-year plan for upcoming road and sidewalk repairs, which can viewed online at bit.ly/street-sidewalk-reconstruction-plan.

Residents can also report potholes or other street issues directly to the City via the Cambridge iReport smart phone app or online at bit.ly/street-sidewalk-maintenance.

If there are specific questions from the individual who originally posed this that I have not addressed, they should feel free to contact me to discuss this further. I can always be reached at: dsimmons@cambridgema.gov.

Q: How can the proposed city master plan connect back to issues that are real for residents today, particularly related to inequities?

Mazen: The masterplan is an opportunity for stakeholders to come together for consistent discussion regarding the future development of our neighborhoods and our city.

While developers often have a vision for a given project, communities often lack a venue for the same level of proactive planning and input. The master plan process represents a great opportunity –a forum for stakeholders to discuss issues like traffic, environment, inclusionary

housing, non-profit development, incentive zoning, and other tools in order to address social equity in our communities. In the end, the master plan will provide the city with clear goals as well as a plan for achieving them.



Update on STEAM

Councillor Mazen submitted a document related to the evening's discussion of Science Technology Engineering Art and Math (STEAM) and out-of-school time. View it online at: bit.ly/1hhmiCe

Tips for Getting Involved

The Councillors suggested tips for residents who wish to increase their civic engagement:

- Attend City Council meetings (info: www.cambridgema.gov/ccouncil.aspx)
- Go to community meetings in your neighborhood
- Join an action team
- Share organizing strategies across neighborhoods

Contact the Councillors

All Councillors can be called at (617) 349-4280 or emailed (together) at council@cambridgema.gov.

Take Our Short Survey

Unable to attend our meeting with Cambridge City Council, but still want to get involved? Take this short, six-question survey online: bit.ly/council-survey-4-2014

Correction From April Whistler

In the April edition of *The Whistler*, we incorrectly listed ABC Board Director Fred Meyer's street. His correct street is Hammond.



Community

ANNUAL MEETING

Please join us Tuesday, May 13th, for our annual meeting; a once-a-year celebration and social event dedicated to reaching out to one another in a friendly way to begin a successful new year.

Everyone is welcome to attend, meet the board, and enjoy light refreshments.

What: Annual Meeting
When: Tuesday, May 13, 7:30 PM
Where: Maud Morgan Arts Center, 2D studio, second floor

The council will vote to approve the slate (below) for the 2014/2015 Board of Directors.

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:

Emily Anderson, Mass. Ave.
Miriam Goldberg, Frost St.
Fred Meyer, Hammond Street
Andrea Walsh, Eustis St.

Directors in mid-term:

Stephen Diamond, Frost St.
Wendy Prellwitz, Wendell St.
Susana Segat, Wendell St.
Hull Fulweiler, Howland St.

REMEMBERING STEVEN BRION-MEISELS

ABC regrets to report the passing of Steven Brion-Meisels, long-time community member and Sacramento St. resident. The obituary below was published in the March 23 Boston Globe.

Steven Brion-Meisels, husband, father, activist, peacemaker, teacher, artist and mentor, passed away in March at the age of 64. Born and raised on Long Island, Steven spent his childhood and adolescence surrounded by a loving family. In his youth and adulthood, Steven became deeply committed to movements for peace and justice.



Steven will be remembered for his eternally positive attitude, large and generous smile, signature MLK buttons, and deep commitment to grass-roots social change. He is survived by his wife, Linda; his sisters, Kathleen, Lois, and Marguerite; his daughters, Gretchen, Sophia, and Eliza; his grandchildren Izzy and Ian; and a loving community of friends and students, all of whom will miss him dearly.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Steven's name to either The Peace Action Education Fund or a fund for a memorial bench/bike rack, in Steven's honor, along the Charles River bike path. Donations to either fund can be made at:
<http://masspeaceaction.org/stevenbrion-meiselsfund>

SAVE THE DATE: PLAY DAY! A COMMUNITY PARTY

Come celebrate our community and the arts at our fourth annual Play Day!

What: Play Day! A Community Party
When: Saturday, June 14th,
1:00-4:00 PM
Admission: Free

Enjoy:
Snacks! Bocce!
Raffle prizes! BIG blue building blocks!
GIANT bubble station!

Community arts project!
Agassiz Dance Crew performance!
And more!

Check out photos from last year's event on Flickr:
bit.ly/play-day-2013



PORTER SQUARE & MASS. AVE. CLEAN UP A SUCCESS

Prepared by Ruth Ryles of Neighborhood 9

We had a very successful Clean Up Porter Square and Mass. Ave. (and St. James Church and Lesley University.) The weather was beautiful, the turnout was great, and despite the grunt work, a good time was had by all.



Thanks to everyone who volunteered, brought tools, spread the word, and to the many, many organizers!

A very special thanks to:

- Tags Hardware, which contributed a large quantity of push brooms, contractor bags, etc.
- Christopher's restaurant which gave those who gathered at noon (quite a few!) a host of nibbles
- MBTA for cleaning up the station. (Big thanks to Alice Wolf for suggesting it, and to Marjorie Decker's office for making it happen.)
- DPW for picking up all of our trash bags

Please patronize these wonderful neighborhood businesses and thank them.

Photos, special thanks to Stephen Diamond, at:
bit.ly/beautify-mass-ave-photos-2014

Community Calendar

May 2014

Monday, May 5	7:00-8:30 PM	LWN Computer Lounge Spring Open House North Hall Community Room, 1651 Mass. Ave. Info: bit.ly/lwn-spring-open-house-2014
Tuesday, May 13	7:30-9:00 PM	Annual Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento St., 2D Studio All are welcome, please join us!
Wednesday, May 14	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St, 2nd Floor Public welcome
Monday, May 26		Memorial Day holiday, ABC Programs and office closed

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. 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