

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

June 2014

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ANC News

NOTES FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

Construction Begins on Mass. Ave. Demo Block

Neighborhood 9 resident Ron Axelrod provided an update on street and sidewalk improvements along Massachusetts Avenue. The work is being performed in connection with the Mass. Ave. Master Plan, design and infrastructure standards developed to improve the pedestrian safety, accessibility and character of Mass. Ave.

Recently, the City of Cambridge awarded a contract for Chapter 90 (state funding for roadway projects) construction, which included applying the new Master Plan standards to a Demonstration Block from the Shepard/Wendell intersection to Garfield St. on the west side. Residents and visitors to the area will soon see curbside and sidewalk improvements, such as:

- Curb extensions at Shepard, Sacramento, and Garfield Sts., which shorten the distance at pedestrian crossings
- New sidewalks with a pattern inlaid in the concrete and 3' brick edge at the curb
- New, more robust 3.5" caliper trees planted in larger tree pits, protected by either a metal grate or fence
- Artistic and historic enhancements

Additional funding for improvements between Everett and Wendell Sts. was provided by Harvard University. This includes:

- Updated accessibility ramps on the east side of the street
- Raised ramps at curbs for pedestrians

The Master Plan guidelines will also be applied to Chapter 90 roadwork on nearby Linnaean St.

Following a juried competition and through the support of a grant from the Cambridge Agassiz Harvard Fund, artist Ross Miller has been commissioned to design new seating areas. These will be located near the curb extensions and are comprised of an arrangement of benches and granite planters. The planters will contain drought-tolerant grasses and plants, and the benches will be painted bronze to match the planters. A historical marker will complete these pedestrian-friendly zones.

About the Master Plan

The Mass. Ave. Master Plan, a collaborative effort between residents and the City to improve Mass. Ave. between the Cambridge Common and Porter Square, has been in process since 2010. View a draft of the plan online at: bit.ly/lower-mass-ave-plan

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



JUNE 10 - 7:30 PM

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

Agenda:

- Lesley University Construction Update
- Harvard University Update

Additionally, follow the construction via MassAvenue, a local blog documenting the improvements: massavenue.wordpress.com

2014/2015 Board of Directors

The council voted unanimously to approve the 2014/2015 Board slate, listed below:

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, Abodeon
- Miriam Goldberg, Frost St.
- Fred Meyer, Hammond St.
- Andrea Walsh, Eustis St.

Learn more about the ABC Board online at: agassiz.org/about/board



Community

ABC THANKS RED DAY VOLUNTEERS

A crew of about fifteen realtors and associates from the Cambridge/Somerville office of Keller Williams Realty spent a sunny May 8 volunteering to beautify the front yard of Agassiz Baldwin Community.

This is the fifth consecutive year that the local realtors chose ABC for their Red Day project, a service initiative where Keller Williams Realty agents throughout the United States and Canada donate their time and resources to improving their local communities.

Ellen Friedman, a long-time Agassiz resident and former ABC Board Director, coordinated the project. The agents were fortified by coffee and delicious bagels and cream cheese imported

from Jamaica Plain by ABC Community Liaison Phoebe Sinclair.



**COMMUNITY QUESTIONS
CONTINUED FROM MAY WHISTLER**

In the May 2014 edition of the Whistler, Cambridge City Councillors responded to questions posed by the Agassiz Community, following a Special Community Meeting. Below, find excerpts of Councillor Dennis Carlone’s response.

The full text can be downloaded from the ABC website at:

bit.ly/community-questions-june-whistler

- Q:** How can we as a community attract and keep middle-income people in Cambridge, including families?
- A:** To understand the problem of affordability in our community, and to make sense of the conditions that have already forced many families out of Cambridge, we have to start by recognizing that we live in an era of profound wealth inequality – you have to go back to the Gilded Age to find a comparable period – and yet, we find ourselves in this tremendous city, a city that is the envy of the entire Commonwealth, a city that has global appeal. We are already one of the densest cities in the United States, so no matter what we do now, it’s unlikely that our supply of housing could ever match the market-demand.

Nevertheless, we do have affordable housing programs in place, and we are looking to expand those programs to include a new category of affordable housing called “middle income” housing, which generally applies to people earning 80% to 120% of area median income (AMI).

Moreover, we also have to make the most of the tools that are already at our disposal. For example, our city has an Incentive Zoning program that is designed to get developers of large, new commercial buildings (such as bio-labs or office towers) to make Housing Contributions to local affordable housing programs. [Excerpt]

Q: When, if ever, will Cambridge Streets get fixed?/How can we make the city safer for bikes, pedestrians, and cars?

A: As chairperson of the council’s Transportation and Public Utilities Committee, I can say that “there is no finish line” when it comes to our streets. We have rough winters, and so the ice, snow, salt, plows, and potholes all take their toll. In addition, we have to continually upgrade our water and utility infrastructure, and now, we are also talking about ways to think about municipal broadband, perhaps underground.

If you have specific concerns about construction issues or needs in your neighborhood, perhaps the fastest way to report them is through the iReport system, see the city’s webpage (www.cambridgema.gov/iReport.aspx), or contact my aide, Mike Connolly (mconnolly@cambridgema.gov) and he will assist you in filing a report. As residents, we all have a role to play in providing the city with input and feedback to help prioritize the quality of road construction and maintenance. [Excerpt]

Read the full text of both excerpts at:
bit.ly/community-questions-june-whistler

PLAY DAY COMMUNITY PARTY 2014

At Agassiz Baldwin’s Play Day: A Community Party, a spring event to celebrate the community, get a head-start on Father’s Day



fun! This year’s event features some returning favorites and new activities, including:

- Embark on a scavenger hunt to win a door prize
- Create a tie-dye banner at Maud Morgan Arts
- Visit the Pop-Up Portrait Studio with photographer Dennis O’Reilly
- Watch a performance from our very own Agassiz Afterschool Dance Crew
- Snack on crunchy popcorn and juicy watermelon
- Marvel at the artwork on display at the closing reception of “New Perspectives,” an exhibit curated by Agassiz Baldwin Afterschool students
- Relax with a cup of coffee at the Living Well Network Café
- Enter our raffle to win gift cards to local restaurants, bookstores, arts and crafts retailers, and clothing boutiques
- Gaze in wonder as Balloon Twister Wendy transforms a balloon into your favorite animal
- Enjoy bocce, face painting, big blue blocks and more!

What: 4th Annual Play Day:
A Community Party
When: Saturday, June 14, 1:00-4:00 PM
Where: 20 Sacramento Street, back yard,
rain or shine
Who: YOU! Come to this
FREE event

Check out photos from last year’s Play Day on Flickr: bit.ly/play-day-2013

Community Calendar

June 2014

Tuesday, June 10	7:30-9:00 PM	ANC Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento St., 2D Studio All are welcome, please join us!
Wednesday, June 11	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St., 2nd Floor Public welcome
Saturday, June 14	1:00-4:00 PM	Play Day: A Community Party!, 20 Sacramento Street, see page 3 for details

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

The Whistler June 2014



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DO NOT FORWARD

DO YOU USE FACEBOOK?
DO YOU TWEET? *Stay connected with us this summer via ABC and MMA social media.*

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@maudmorganarts

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/maudmorganarts

The Whistler newsletter, ANC meetings, and ABC Board meetings are in recess during July and August. Newsletter publication and meetings will resume in September 2014. We wish you a safe and splendid summer!