

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

April 2014

IN THIS ISSUE

**ANC News: Rep. Decker Presents
MA Legislative Priorities, Help
Beautify Mass. Ave.** 1-3

**Community: 2014/15 ABC Board
Slate** 3

ANC News

NOTES FROM THE MAR 11 MEETING

Rep. Decker Presents MA Legislative Priorities

"I'm here to check in about what's on the minds and hearts of the community," said State Representative Marjorie Decker. "Also, I'll share the priorities I'm working on in the legislature."

Serving Cambridge as a City Councilor from 1999-2013, Rep. Decker was elected to the House of Representatives in 2012. The only representative whose district is entirely in Cambridge, Decker serves Agassiz, Riverside, Mid-Cambridge, and parts of Cambridgeport, West Cambridge and North Cambridge, including much of the area surrounding Porter Square.

Rep. Decker stated, "My experience on the Cambridge City Council has been invaluable in helping me navigate the State House. Going in, I have spent much of my time getting to know people and building relationships. I have a sense of collegiality and a great freshman class."

Rep. Decker serves on three House committees:

1.) Health Care Financing

This committee oversees the funding of health

care programs and many other aspects of health care policy.

Rep. Decker: "We are calling for oversight around the Mass Health Connector. Massachusetts was the first in the nation to offer this kind of access to health and dental insurance, but we've made some mistakes. Many individuals and advocacy organizations have come to me seeking help navigating the system. I'm learning a lot, and working hard to keep my eye on the ongoing issues with the system."

2.) Financial Services

This committee undertakes legislation relating to banks and other financial institutions, including health and other insurance companies. Working with Financial Services complements Rep. Decker's position on the Health Care Financing Committee.

Rep. Decker: "The Financial Services Committee is working on a bank modernization bill. Recently, there was a provision to remove state oversight of several different types of institutions and transactions, which is part of an overall

SPECIAL COMMUNITY MEETING



APR 8 - 7:30 PM

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

Agenda:

- 2014/15 **ABC Board Slate**
- Come meet **City Councillors Dennis Carlone, Craig Kelley, Nadeem Mazen, Marc McGovern, & Denise Simmons** - ask questions & learn about city efforts to support the middle class - learn more at bit.ly/april-8-anc-meeting

attempt to streamline but would have removed some direct state oversight. I was able to work with my colleagues, the Division of Banks, and the bankers' association to preserve the state's oversight over its own Truth in Lending provision – the oldest in the country, and one of the most protective of consumers.

“I am also taking an active role in advocating for insurance coverage for people with rare diseases and mental health parity.

“Finally, I have filed legislation to mandate newborn screening for ALD (Adrenoleukodystrophy), a genetic disease that occurs mostly in boys. Fighting this disease is infinitely more effective when it is caught early. I became aware of this while touring a Cambridge-based company, Bluebird Bio.”

3.) Housing

This committee addresses public and public-subsidized housing and other housing laws and issues.

Rep. Decker: “Housing is a great committee for me to be on given my background and passion. I work regularly with housing and legal services advocates, and am working hard to expand opportunities for homeless families in MA.”

Other items of importance for Rep. Decker include:

Education

“During last year’s budget process, I was successful in helping to restore funding for pre-K education. That night I gave my maiden speech on early education. I’m now on a special legislative commission to look at early education and care.”

Domestic Violence

“I continue to work on domestic violence. I helped to create a Domestic Violence Leadership Council, which will soon be working closely with neighborhood groups. As part of my efforts, I invited the House Speaker Robert DeLeo to visit Transition House, a domestic violence

shelter in Cambridge where he met with survivors and representatives of wrap-around services working to address domestic violence. Most recently, the Speaker has released comprehensive domestic violence legislation.”

Q&A

Q: How many State Reps represent Cambridge?

A: There are five reps representing parts of Cambridge: Marjorie Decker, Tim Toomey, Jonathan Hecht, Dave Rogers, and Jay Livingstone.

Q: Will the Bottle Bill update (an act to expand the bill to include more beverages in the \$.05 recycling program) be on the ballot in 2014?

A: Yes. The beverage industry has a lot of leverage on this issue, so we need to keep organizing and support the referendum.

Q: Why is the Bottle Bill with the Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy Committee in the House?

A: I don’t know, but can find out for you. **Update:** The Bottle Bill has been part of the Committee’s charge since the 1990s when it was called the Government Regulations Committee and also oversaw various other consumer protection measures.

Q: What is your feeling about Genetically Modified Foods?

A: I am strongly in support of labeling GMOs.

Q: What else will be on the ballot?

A: The Patient Safety Act, which would mandate safe staffing ratios for hospital nurses. Mandatory earned paid sick leave. Also, Tea Party Republicans have organized an initiative around repealing the fuel tax.

Q: Are there efforts around creating a carbon tax?

A: The carbon tax is on the list of progressive priorities.

Q: What about creating tax rates to support small businesses?

A: Reducing the tax rate for a sector of businesses is complicated and would have the potential to cause a large loss in revenues.

Q: What tools are available to help promote small businesses and affordable rents?

A: I'll look into the issue of tax incentives. Related to affordable rents, we need to find out who owns the buildings and how to connect to them (many owners don't live in the state.)

Q: What are the ways we can help?

A: Depending on issues that you care about, there's probably an advocacy group. Find them and get on their email lists. Tell your friends and family outside of Cambridge to contact their local representatives. Remember: all methods for contacting a rep are valid: there's no difference between an email or a phone call.

Rep. Decker concluded, "Please feel free to bring your issues to me. You are more than welcome to call, email, or come visit me at the State House. Join my email list to keep up with news and issues I'm working on."

Speaking on behalf of the Council, Meeting Chair Fred Meyer thanked Rep. Decker.

Help Beautify Mass. Ave.

This April, community members will be taking to the street in Porter Square and along Mass. Ave wielding brooms, gloves, and trash bags. This spring-cleaning effort supports residents and businesses taking more pride in the corridor between Harvard and Porter Squares.

What: Mass. Ave. & Porter Clean Up

When: Saturday, April 12,
9:00 - 12:00 PM

Rain date: Sunday April 13,
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Learn more online at:

bit.ly/help-beautify-mass-ave-2014



Community

2014/2015 ABC BOARD SLATE

The following slate of officers and directors for the Agassiz Baldwin Community Board will be presented at the April 8th Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting. This slate will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 13th.

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, Co-Chair, Frost St.
Fred Meyer, Wendell Street
Andrea Walsh, Co-Chair, Eustis St.

Agassiz Baldwin seeks candidates for board membership on an ongoing basis. Candidates will be considered when vacancies occur or as directors retire at the end of their terms. Those with expertise in law, finance, representatives of local businesses, and people with children in ABC programs are often sought.

Candidates should send a statement that explains their interest in the Board as well as relevant experience and a resumé, if available, to tdelancey@agassiz.org or Agassiz Baldwin Community, Attn: ABC Nominating Committee, 20 Sacramento Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Community Calendar

April 2014

Tuesday, April 8	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, April 9	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St., 2nd Floor Public welcome
Saturday, April 12	9:00 AM-12:00 PM	Mass. Ave. & Porter Square Clean Up, see page 3
Sunday, April 13	3:00-5:00 PM	Direct/Indirect Small Works 2014, Chandler Gallery, 20 Sacramento St., info: bit.ly/small-works-show

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.

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Agassiz Neighborhood Council
20 Sacramento Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
P: (617) 349-6287 F: (617) 497-4388
www.agassiz.org, www.maudmorganarts.org
Twitter: @agassizbaldwin, @maudmorganarts
Facebook: /agassizbaldwin, /maudmorganarts

DO NOT FORWARD

GET INVOLVED!

- *Connect with Cambridge City Council - P2*
- *Help beautify Mass. Ave. - P3*