Neighborhood Council Notes

from 3/9 meeting

Wm. Sommers, new Commissioner at the Cambridge Department of Public Works, was our guest at the March council meeting. He explained the functions of his department including the challenges facing our city in the next few years to solve the problem of waste disposal. He explained that the state will mandate certain programs that must be followed, and that recycling (of things like bottles, cans, newspapers, and plastic) may be a reality in the coming years. Currently the DPW is funding a study to see what future options are available in Cambridge for waste disposal. Other areas Commissioner Sommers spoke on included his intent to improve the overall management of the department, and the city's commitment to upgrade and replace DPW equipment.

The representatives from the neighborhood were interested in two specific issues: 1. Flooding and sewer reconstruction; and 2. Alden Tot Lot Renovation.

The Commissioner advised us that the engineering study for the sewer reconstruction project (phase VI) was just completed, and that there would be a community meeting on this soon. The construction will separate storm drains from sanitary lines, and the community meeting should give us more information and time lines. (He later advised the council that a meeting is slated for April - interested people should call 498-9056).

Commissioner Sommers expressed a willingness to work with Rob Stock of Community Development to save money on construction costs for the Alden Tot Lot. The neighborhood expressed a willingness to choose designs and materials that the DPW can help us maintain over the years. Commissioner Sommers said that the unsafe equipment on the lot was ready to be demolished as soon as they could get a date, and we requested that the lot be demolished with as little interruption to its use as possible. (As most of you know, the demolition took place on March 17, St. Patrick's Day. A load of sand was dumped over the former climbing structure, and the park was ready for use on Friday March 18 - Thank you Commissioner Sommers!)

Mt. Vernon Street Townhouse Project from CDIA (Wasserman) may be getting bigger. It seems that the latest plans for Mt. Vernon Street include a number of affordable housing units - they also include the White Hen Pantry site. For more detailed information on this, come to the April 13 council meeting, when residents who have attended the most current meetings with CDIA will be available to give us a report.

Youth services for young teens (7th grade and up)

In the Agassiz Neighborhood and the Agassiz School will be the focus of discussion at the April 13th Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting. Please come and help us brainstorm, and add to some of the ideas suggested at our February council meeting. The content of afternoon and/or evening and weekend events and programming for that age group will be discussed, as well as any other services that may be needed in the neighborhood.

We have spoken to Eileen Keegan, Division Head of the Cambridge Department of Human Services, and we will present our needs for programming to her later this spring. She hopes to help us by providing the time of a youth specialist for planning this summer, and later to help us pay a youth leader for direct services beginning in September.

HARVARD SQUARE DEVELOPMENT

Watch for petitions from the Coalition for Harvard Square which, due to the surge of development in Harvard Square, requests that the City Council amend the Zoning Ordinance to:

*Reduce the scale and density of new commercial construction
*Encourage new and mixed-income housing
*Close some loopholes regarding special permit height and parking exemptions

For more information contact the coalition at 354-5670 or write to PO Box 19 Cambridge 02238 - and come to the April Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting at 7:30 on 4/13 at 20 Sacramento St.

next council meeting...

Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting
Wednesday April 13, 1988
7:30 PM Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento Street
AGENDA
7:30-8:15 Neighborhood Services to Youth 7th grade and up
8:15-9:30 Harvard Sq Development - Petition and Information
Mt. Vernon St. Development
COMMUNITY HERITAGE PROJECT

The city of Cambridge has allocated $150,000 to renovate the Alden Tot Lot (Agassiz Playground located on Oxford and Sacramento Sts.). Renovation is scheduled to be completed by fall 1988.

Robert Stack of Cambridge Community Development is overseeing the design. At the March Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting he discussed the city’s plans, schedule and process for the playground. Mr. Stack has successfully designed many of the renovated playgrounds in Cambridge.

Once the Alden Tot Lot design is completed, community meetings will be held to review the plans. As a major component of the design a local artist, Wen-Ti Tseng, will work with the neighborhood beginning in the spring of 1989 to create an historical mural reflecting the cultural diversity of the Agassiz community. The Tot Lot will construct a wall, and the mural will be mounted on it when completed, projected for summer 1989.

A first step to designing the mural will be researching our own neighborhood history. For instance, who were AGASSIZ, BALDWIN, EUSTIS and ALDEN ??? All names that we are familiar with on a daily basis and yet we know little about their accomplishments. We hope to begin this research in the fall of 1988, just after the completion of the tot lot renovations.

Historically, the Alden Tot Lot has brought the neighborhood together. This Community Heritage Project plans to continue in this spirit. In order to succeed, neighborhood participation is vital. The mural creation and production must reflect our rich and diverse qualities. The best way to ensure this is to enlist the participation of local city agencies and institutions, including the Agassiz School, Lesley College, the Historical Society, the Agassiz Neighborhood Council and many others.

Separate funding for the Community Heritage Project will be sought by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council from foundations and various businesses.

Watch the Whistler for updates and ways to get involved. For more information call 498-9056

Other Neighborhood Updates

National Car Rental located on the corner of Wendell St. and Mass. Ave. has been contacted again this year regarding the conduct of some of their drivers. We have heard reports that drivers are racing through neighborhood streets, and one report included the dumping of garbage out a car window.

It is our agreement with National Car Rental that drivers take all cars through Porter Square on their way to the airport and do not use neighborhood streets as a pass through. If you see any dangerous driving, please get the car license number and a description of the driver, and the neighborhood council will report it to the company.

New Voting Place Sites were hard to find for many residents during the March 8 election. We had many calls from people, one of whom never found Rockefeller Hall at the Harvard Divinity School (polling place for ward 7, precinct one.) There were fewer complaints about finding the polling place for ward 7 precinct 2 which was at Lesley College. A letter was mailed from the neighborhood council to the Cambridge Election Commission requesting that better markings, more signs and possibly a map be given to voters.

Vice Mayor Alice Wolf followed up on our letter and agreed with us that both polling places could use more marking and publicity.

She additionally advised us that she has asked the city to assess the cost of making the Agassiz School (former polling place for both precincts) handicapped accessible, which would be good for both children and voters.

Another resident contacted us to say that senior citizens can vote by absentee ballot if getting to the polling place is too difficult. Please contact the Cambridge Council on Aging 498-9039 or the Cambridge Election Commission 498-9087 for more information.

Whistler Deadline is the 25th of Each Month. Send us articles, ads, letters to the editor, any information that you feel would be of interest to the Agassiz neighborhood.
RACISM ??? IN CAMBRIDGE ???

The Cambridge Human Rights Commission is sponsoring a public hearing and educational conference on Saturday, April 30 from 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway.

A public hearing will be convened to provide an opportunity for the public to give testimony regarding racism and prejudice that have occurred in Cambridge. In addition to the taking of public testimony, the day long event will include workshops and discussion groups that focus on such topics as the political economy of racism, the current nature of institutional racism, ways to develop cross-cultural dialog and to confront racism and prejudice in the work place, classroom and neighborhood.

For more information contact the Human Rights Commission at 498-9049.

LESLEY COLLEGE News and Events

Thanks from the Students who ran the Toy Drive last December: The drive was a great success, and they provided toys for a needy agency in Boston. Next year they will be contacting us earlier (hopefully in November), so save your toys for them.

Lesley-Agassiz Balloon Launch will be held on April 25th on the Lesley College Campus. For the past two years in celebration of the Week of the Young Child, the Lesley and Agassiz Communities have collaborated on a balloon launch after school. Details are not available at the moment, but look for information which will be handed out through the Agassiz School later in April, or call the council office at 498-9056.

ADS HELP AVAILABLE HELP WANTED

For sale: Disk drive - External 400K Macintosh disk drive for single sided 3 1/2" disks for Macintosh 128 and 512. $150 or best offer. Call Anita at 864-3448.

CRIMEWATCH

This is a list of crime in the Agassiz Neighborhood .....March 1988.....

Agassiz School..................Theft of purse (3/11)
Carver St.........................Disorderly person (at Wendell 3/8), Destruction of property (3/16)
Eustis St.........................Missing person (3/21)
Frost St...........................Obscene Phone Calls (3/9)
Mass. Ave.........................2 Incidents of Commercial Break and entry (3/11 and 19), Theft from unlocked car (3/20), Hit and Run Property (3/12), Indecent assault and battery (3/16)
Oxford St.........................Obscene Phone Calls (3/19)
Sacramento St...............Purse theft in community center (3/18)
Wendell St........................Bicycle theft (3/10) 3 Incidents of break and entry (3/10), possession of burgulary tools (3/18)

** Also - a Eustis Street family's car was stolen when it was parked on Beacon Street near Eustis in Somerville.

FOR SENIORS

The Cambridge Council on Aging needs volunteers to serve as visitors to the homebound elderly to chat or take short neighborhood walks. Meet an interesting new friend who will really value your companionship. Our volunteers offer friendship, enrichment and assistance during a once-weekly visit. Call Sandra Kahn at 498-9039 for more information.

The Somerville Cambridge Elders Services has a program, ADULT FAMILY CARE, which places elders in homes, not institutions. It is available to men and women aged 60 and above who cannot live safely alone and may be at risk of placement in an institution. The program is open to all regardless of income, and it is far less than nursing homes.

Host families receive a stipend, and they are supported with training from the family care center and visits from the family care nurse. Hosts can be families, retired elders, or anyone who can provide a friendly, supervised environment. For more information call 628-2601 and ask about Adult Family Care.
Community School programs

OUTBACK SUMMER CAMP - This day camp is open to any child entering grades 1-6. There are 8 weeks of camp with or without an extended day option, and you may register for any number of weeks. Cost is $50 per week, $75 for camp and extended day. Program is staffed by community school teachers and includes specialists in drama, art, and sports. Weekly trips and performers are planned. Counselor in Training Program available for entering grades 7-9. For more information and a brochure call 498-9056.

ARTS ALL DAY SUMMER CAMP - directed and taught by Jill Gleim and Susan Pertale in the Agassiz School building from June 29th through July 29. Arts All Day is a performance related camp for children 5-11 years old. The cost is $425 for 5 weeks. Three teachers, 30 children and 3 teen helpers study and work together to produce and perform musical dance and theatre pieces. We are looking for boys of all ages, especially boys with theatre/music and dance interests who would like to have an opportunity to explore with performance.

We need teenagers 12 years and older interested in apprenticing for part or all of the 5 week program. For information call Jill Gleim 876-1194.

K-2 AFTERSCHOOL CHILDCARE PROGRAM - This program, which provides childcare 5 days per week for 40 children in all neighborhoods and schools in Cambridge, has four teaching staff, and is located in the Agassiz Community Center at 20 Sacramento St., just one half block from the Agassiz School. Cost is on a sliding fee scale, from $68-168 per month, and this fee includes all half days and full day vacation week care.

Spaces are filled early, and a waiting list is maintained all year. Call the office for more information - 498-9056.

SACRAMENTO STREET PRESCHOOL - A nursery school program which runs 5 days per week from 9:00 AM-12 Noon concurrent with the Cambridge Public School Calendar. There are 16 children enrolled between the ages of 2.9-4 years, with two teachers and one assistant teacher. Fees are currently $125 per month.

AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES PROGRAM - If you are interested in weekly part time programs (3 days or less) for children in grades K-6, or full time programs (5 days a week) for children in 3-6th grades, you will want to register for the Afterschool Activities Program. Part time registration is available by mail in mid August, but you may register as late as the first two days of school. Parents may only register in advance for full time status. Call the office at 498-9056.

Graffiti at Cambridge Public Library

The Agassiz Afterschool players, directed by Carol Hantman, have been asked by Vice Mayor Alice Wolf to perform their play GRAFFITI as part of the Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust on April 14 in the Cambridge Public Library's Main Branch. The play, written and acted by the Agassiz Afterschool Players, was a result of the racial and anti-Semitic graffiti that was painted on the Agassiz School this Christmas. Agassiz Afterschool Players Christiane Cormerais, Justin Doo, Delaney Fisher, Ashley Freeman, Emily Griffin, Tove Hermanson, Tamar Laffert, and Matthew Napier will reprise their parts in the play.

Eighth grade students from the Harrington, Kennedy and Peabody schools will attend the performance which will also be taped by Ned Casey for Community Access Cable and for distribution to Cambridge Public Schools Classroom.

May Day Celebration - A group of community children have been rehearsing and learning traditional dances for our Annual May Day Celebration. All will meet at the Alden Tot Lot at 7 AM on Sunday May First and proceed to Sacramento Field.

Everyone is invited. Bring a blanket and breakfast, and you will enjoy music, Morris Dances, Maypole Dances and possibly some special surprises!

YOGA

The Yoga Experience - Classes in Kripalu Yoga, taught by certified teacher Danielle Levi Alvares. For every age and condition - men and pregnant women encouraged to attend. Class information below, for more information and fees call Danielle Levi Alvares at 354-2113.

*beginning Tuesday April 5th for 12 weeks
9:30-10:30 AM and 7-8 PM at Jillisville, 354A Beacon St. (Camb/Swell line)
*beginning Thursday April 7th for 12 weeks
8-9 AM at Jillisville, 354A Beacon St. (Camb/Swell line)
2:15-3:15 PM at Tobin School, 197 Vassal Lane, Camb.
*beginning Monday April 11 for 10 weeks
12:30-1:30 PM and 6:30-7:30 PM at First Church of Cambridge Congregational, 11 Garden St., Camb.
April 1, Friday .......................... Good Friday No School or Afterschool
April 13, Wednesday .................. Early Release Day. Public School Closes and
Agassiz Afterschool opens at 12:45 PM
April 13, Wednesday .................. Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting
7:30, 20 Sacramento St. (see agenda page 1)
April 14, Thursday ................. GRAFFITI performance, Cambridge Public Library
Main Branch for Cambridge Public School Students
April 15, Friday ..................... Family Folk Dance 7:30-9:30 PM Agassiz School
Children $1.50, Adults $2.50 - All welcome!
April 18-22 Mon-Fri .............. Cambridge Public School Vacation. Community School
Vacation Week Childcare 8:30-5:30 for afterschool
participants. Advance registration required.
April 30, Saturday ................ RACISM IN CAMBRIDGE? (See article)
Sponsored by Human Rights Commission 9:30-4:30 PM
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School 459 Broadway
May 1, Sunday .................... Annual May Day Celebration 7 AM at the Alden Tot Lot,
proceed to Sacramento Field

April 1983
Agassiz Neighborhood Council
20 Sacramento Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
498-9056

THE WHISTLER