Neighborhood Council Notes

(This section of The Whistler reports on last month's Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting. All members of the community activate their membership by attending council meetings held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. You may bring up any issue of general neighborhood interest during general business. For a formal place on the agenda, which appears on the front page of The Whistler, call the council at 498-9056.)

Our first speaker was Chris Berner from Sen. Mike Barrett's Office who discussed the progress of the "Cohen bill," which is a watershed protection act that did not include Cambridge's reservoir. Our water supply is located dangerously close to proposed developments near routes 128 and 2.

Many people attended a hearing at the State House on February 28 including City Councilors Alice Wolf and Frank Duehey, many officials from neighboring towns and residents. The testimony was intended to persuade the natural resources committee that Cambridge should be included in the legislation, and it worked.

The legislation was actually written to protect the metropolitan area's watershed, located around large reservoirs in western Mass. Berner told us there was a good chance the legislation would pass, although there is opposition from western Mass. regarding compensation to property owners who feel development rights would be restricted. We must develop a network, to be called Friends of the Cambridge Reservoir, and remain vigilant.

[For more information on the Cohen bill, what it says, the kinds of restrictions on development in the watershed and the size of the restricted area call Chris Berner at Mike Barrett's office, 722-1280.]

If you want to support Rep. Cohen's Watershed Protection bill, contact Representative Charles Flaherty (State Rep. for parts of Cambridge and also Majority Leader). Call him at 722-2600 or write (Room 343, State House Boston 02133). For a list of all state legislators in the Cambridge delegation, see below.

Dick Easler spoke next on the Incentive Zoning Amendment, which is an attempt by CDD (Community Development Department) to address the traffic and parking problems in Cambridge through zoning. (For the report from CDD, please contact the council office at 498-9056.) Simply stated developers with certain size projects who wish to have other than the amount of parking required by zoning, must come up with a program to keep the traffic impact down during and after construction of their project. The traffic ratio of the area developed will determine how restrictive the plan must be. Through a complicated formula, CDD has determined that Porter Square will be permitted the same traffic ratios as the Larchmere and Alewife areas. Harvard, Kendall and Central Squares will be more restrictive.

There was some discussion regarding the way squares were categorized, but CDD felt that it was necessary to keep it simple, so that the city council would accept it as a first step for Cambridge to deal with their traffic and parking dilemma through zoning. Many people felt simplicity was not the issue but controlling the traffic in Porter square was.

Is your house safe?

A house on Sacramento St. literally sank into the ground. Is your house heading in the same direction?

Jeff May, of J. May Home Inspections, Inc., will address the Agassiz Neighborhood Council on April 12th at 8:30 p.m. on the processes that deteriorate housing, using a slide presentation that documents two recent neighborhood changes: the restoration of a house on Sacramento St. and the construction of a liquor store on Beacon St.

Jeff teaches courses on buildings at the adult education centers in Cambridge and Brookline. He received a M.A. in Chemistry (Harvard '69), taught high school chemistry at the Cambridge School (Weston), and operated a local contracting business.

next council meeting

April Council Meeting

Wednesday April 12th at 7:30 p.m.

Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting

2. Sacramento St. (call 498-9056 for information)

The Council closed with the following agenda:

- 7:30 p.m. SENATOR MICHAEL BARRETTI (D-Cambridge) on the state budget and spending for next year in Massachusetts.
- 8:30 p.m. JEFF MAY of May Home Inspections and neighborhood resident on processes that deteriorate houses (see article).

Other Neighborhood Updates

Nominating Committee

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council will soon name a nominating committee that will recommend a slate of officers to serve on the Executive Board. If you have any recommendations for the nominating committee (or nominations for the executive board) call the council office at 498-9056.
Holiday Spa’s Racial Discrimination Charges

Last month it was reported in The Whistler that the Justice Department had filed racial discrimination charges against Holiday Spa, a 260,000 member health spa chain. The charges allege that they had “implemented a policy and practice of denying to blacks the full and equal use of their facilities in violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act”. The Holiday Health Spa has a location which just opened in Porter Exchange.

This company had also been investigated by the State Attorney General’s Office in the past few months, and they have had to return membership fees to many consumers who were promised certain membership benefits falsely.

Councillor Alice Wolf requested information from the city manager on the status of Holiday Health Spa. Cambridge Consumers’ Council has informed the city council that the Justice Department is looking into the Cambridge and other Massachusetts clubs. There will be a report out soon, and The Whistler will keep you informed.

Paul Schlafer of the Cambridge Consumers’ Council has advised us that anyone who has any consumer concerns about the Holiday Health Spa should contact his office at 499-6150.

Billboard in Porter Square up for license renewal

The billboard located on top of the Commonwealth Lock Building (home of BayBank and Commonwealth Lock) is up for license renewal.

The Cambridge Ward 7 Democratic Committee has voted to oppose renewal of the license for this billboard on the basis that it obstructs light from the park located next to it. They feel that the interests of the general public who use the park outweigh the interests of the advertiser in this location.

Members of the council are concerned that the billboard is located on an historic building, and detracts from it.

If you have any opinion on the matter, please contact City Manager Robert Haely at City Hall, and tell him how you feel about this issue.

Update on Community Residence at Hammond St.

Noelle Blanchard, George Hein and Robert Whalen are neighborhood representatives to CHA (Cambridge Housing Authority) regarding the community residence that is currently being developed at 71 Hammond St. You can contact them through the council office at 498-9056 with questions or concerns.

Somerville Cooperative Apartment Project (CASCAP) has been named as the vendor, and they will be running the program at the site when alterations to the building are finished. Currently a designer selection process is in progress which should be completed and an architect chosen in early May. Plans should be finalized by summer, and CHA will apply to the BZA (Board of Zoning Appeals) for a special permit this summer.

There will be an update on the entire project by CHA at the Agassiz Neighborhood Council’s June 14th meeting.

STOP PROPOSITION 1-2-3

Proposition 1-2-3 will be a binding referendum on the November 1989 ballot. Under Proposition 1-2-3 rent controlled apartments may be converted to condos if the tenant and the landlord agree, and if the tenant has lived there for 2 years. Homeowners plan? Committee to Defeat Proposition 1-2-3 says only at the expense of the tenants.

A meeting will be held on Wednesday April 12th at 7:30 p.m. at the Old Cambridge Baptist Church. For more information call the committee at 491-STOP.

CRIMEWATCH

This is a list of crime in the Agassiz Neighborhood....February 26 through March 23, 1989

Eustis St. .......... Car theft (3/25); Theft from unlocked car (3/23)
Francis Av. .......... Malicious destruction property (2/26); Theft from unlocked car (3/7)
Garfield St. .......... Hit and run property (3/20)
Hammond St. .......... Hit and run property (3/5)
Harris St. .......... Theft from unlocked car (3/14)
Kirkland St. ......... Car theft (1/31); Theft from unlocked car (3/3); break and entry (2/4); Hit and run property (3/17)
Mass. Ave. .......... Fraud, false pretenses (2/28); Malicious destruction property (2/26); Trespassing (3/15); Prostitution (3/20)
Prentiss St. .......... Malicious destruction property (3/12); Break and entry (3/20)
Sacramento St. .......... Hit and run property (3/5)
Wendell St. .......... Theft from unlocked car (3/20, 3/21); Hit and run property (3/6); Malicious destruction property (3/18)

Benefit for Cambridge Performance Project

On Thursday April 6th at 7:30 p.m. there will be a benefit “Making Waves” to keep the Cambridge Performance Project afloat. There will be performances of music, dance and theatre by the faculty of the Cambridge Performance Project at the Harrington School, 880 Cambridge St. Admission – $4.00, Children and Seniors – $2.00.

The benefit will go directly to the Cambridge Performance Project. Featured are Vicki Solomon, Jeryllann Owens, Sheila Winn, Phillip Hamilton, Susan Periale, Joan Green, Martha Rogers, Patrick Daugherty and his band Vasco da Gama. Smari, Melissa Hibbert, Carlo Rizzo. For more information call 498-9072.

Whistler deadline for MAY is APRIL 21st. Please call or send us any newsworthy information.
Miss Baldwin of Agassiz

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council presents the Agassiz Afterschool Players, who will perform an original theatre piece entitled "Miss Baldwin of Agassiz" on Saturday, April 8th at 7:30 p.m. at the Agassiz School, in Maria Baldwin Hall.

The work is based on the life of Maria Baldwin (1852-1922), the first black headmistress in Cambridge who devoted forty years of service to the Agassiz School and extensive service to the black community in and around Cambridge. It is a collaborative effort by playwright/director Carol Huntman and the 17 young people, ages 9-12 who have been participants in an eight-week afterschool drama program. Their production of "Graffiti" was an overwhelming success last March.

Both "Graffiti" and "Miss Baldwin of Agassiz" are representative of a larger project sponsored by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council that is designed to increase awareness of the neighborhood's rich historical cultural diversity.

Recently the City of Cambridge allocated money for renovations to Agassiz School which will be used in part to renovate Maria Baldwin Hall (also the gym and auditorium). Completion of renovations, the Hall will be rededicated to Miss Baldwin, and the play will be reproduced to celebrate that event.

Agassiz Afterschool Players include: Melina Avery, Ned Colby, Kimberly Dervis, Emily Griffin, Danielle Hobelka, Neil Kadegathur, Kate Kindleberger, Ben Leff, Tamar Leffert, Jessie Ornstein, Tove Reiss Hermanson, Michael Rosenberg, Luc Schuster, Sophia Sikowitz, Ellen A. Sitkin, Rafi Soifer, and Henry Towsner.

Admission is free, but donations are gratefully accepted at the door.

We are Looking for Old Photos and Memorabilia

In preparation for a gallery show depicting our neighborhood, we are looking for photos or any mementos from the past-graduation programs from Agassiz School, maps, letters, newspapers, magazines, directories, etc.

The photos don't have to be very old, but should show us how the neighborhood has changed or depicted another time, or a special event. The Historical Commission will help us to copy them, and may even archive them. The original will be returned to you.

Call us at 498-9056, or mail photos to 20 Sacramento St. Cambridge 02138. Be sure to include your name, address, telephone and any information regarding the photo including date you know it. If necessary we can come and pick up and return your pictures.

Please Note: We are looking specifically for any photos that include Maria Baldwin, 40 years at Agassiz and first black headmistress in New England. Any photo including her would be deeply appreciated.

APRIL 1989

Join the Agassiz May Day Celebration

Community May Day Celebration—Meet at the Alden Tot Lot (on the corner of Sacramento and Oxford Sts.) 7 a.m. and parade to Sacramento Field for dancing around the Maypole. There will be other dancing, music, storytelling and some surprises. Festivities will end at 9 a.m.

Children have been studying Maypole and Morris dances, and they will be dressed for the holiday. Come and join the festivities. For more information call Ada Snider at 661-2961 or Jill Gleim at 876-1194.

Agassiz Oral History Project to begin

On April 4th at 10 a.m. a group of people representing not just Agassiz residents, but also Lesley College, Harvard volunteers, neighborhood seniors, and other Cambridge agencies will meet with members of the Oral History Center to begin a study of the Agassiz neighborhood's oral history. This will be an organizational meeting, and after it the work will begin.

Anyone who is interested in working on the oral history project should contact the council office at 498-9056. After the April 4th meeting we will have specific activities but we will need people to make phone calls, interview others, and transcribe interviews from tape to paper.

If you are or know anyone who may be able to give us an interesting interview on any aspect of the Agassiz neighborhood, please call. We are also developing a mailing list for this project, so call us (498-9056) if you would like to be included, and we will send you flyers and other information relevant to this project.

Family Folk Dancing at Agassiz

The next session of Family Folk dance with Jill Gleim will be held on Friday, April 7th from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. in Baldwin Hall (the Agassiz School gym). All invited, live music, admission $2.

LESLEY COLLEGE News and Events

The Agassiz Youth Chorus under the direction of Ada Snider will perform songs from Leonard Bernstein's West Side Story in a spring concert at Lesley College in Welsh Auditorium Thursday April 13th at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free.

This is a joint project for Lesley and Agassiz, thanks to the continued bridge made between communities by the Lesley-Agassiz Resources Committee, chaired by Linda Brion Meisels. The chorus rehearses at Lesley College and includes singers from 5 different Cambridge schools, all of whom have a link with the Agassiz neighborhood.

The Agassiz Youth Chorus includes Emily Bard, Serena Blanchard, Gretchen Brion Meisels, Joanna Case, Liam Case, Anna Coffeen, Molly D'Ambra, Mara de la Rosa, Lene Entin, Polly Fiveash, Ellie Goldberg, Rachel Skye-Harris, Sheila Kadegathur, Eva Kim, Johanna Mitchell, Jessica Rivas, Danielle Silver, Liana Snider, Victoria Treece, Allison Watkins, Nell Whiting, and Lan Xue.
APRIL COMMUNITY CALENDAR

4/4 Tuesday.......................... Planning meeting—Agassiz Oral History 10-12 a.m. Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento St. All interested are invited. Call Geri Guardino at 498-9056 for information.

4/6 Thursday.......................... School closes, afterschool opens 12:45 p.m.

4/7 Friday............................. Family Folk Dancing 7:30 p.m. Agassiz School Baldwin Hall $2 admission—Children welcome.

4/8 Saturday.......................... "Miss Baldwin of Agassiz" performed by the Agassiz Youth Players 7:30 Baldwin Hall Agassiz School 28 Sacramento St. Free, donations welcome (see article)

4/12 Wednesday...................... Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting 7:30 p.m. Agassiz School (See page one for agenda)
4/12 Wednesday...................... Agassiz School Improvement Committee 3 p.m. Agassiz School – Resource Room
4/13 Thursday....................... Agassiz Youth Chorus 7:30 p.m. at Welch Auditorium, Lesley College, 29 Everett St. Admission free (see article)

4/17-21 Mon-Fri..................... Public School April Vacation Week—school and community school regular programs closed. Childcare available to enrolled afterschool students–preregistration necessary.

5/1 Monday........................... Community May Day Celebration–Meet at the Alden Tot Lot (across from Agassiz School) 7 a.m. and parade to Sacramento Field for dancing music and festivities. Everyone is invited.

THE WHISTLER
Agassiz Neighborhood Council
20 Sacramento Street
Cambridge, MA 02138 498-9056

KNOW YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS - CLIP AND SAVE

State Legislators—Cambridge Delegation 1989

Senate
Senator Michael Barrett Rm 405 722-1280
Senator Michael LoPresti Rm 413A 722-1634
Senator Richard Kraus Rm 511 722-1432

House of Representatives
Representative Alvin Thompson Rm 40 722-2240
Representative Peter Vellucci Rm 540 722-2090
Representative Charles Flaherty Rm 343 722-2600

* Address all correspondence to State House, Boston, MA 02133. For a list of all legislators and committees send a self addressed stamped envelop to CPPAX Education Fund, 25 West St., 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02133. These legislators represent all parts of Cambridge (in some cases more than Cambridge). To find your specific legislators, you must know your ward and precinct (city hall can tell you), then call 727-7030, Citizens Information Service at the State House.