Council Meeting Notes

The March 19 Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting began with a presentation by Sandra Coleman, Administrative Dean, Harvard Law School. She presented plans for the new building the law school will construct beginning this summer on Holmes Field. It will be placed on the campus, next to Langdell Hall, which is the library building. She advised us that the construction vehicles will use Mass. Ave. rather than Oxford St., and she agreed to keep us updated on the building. (We were also advised that final construction has begun on North Hall, the former Quality Inn. This work will continue through the summer, with an expected completion date of August 15. (See article below under neighborhood news for a complete update.)

The second half of the meeting was a discussion of site options for the Agassiz School. David Chilinski and Susan Sills, both neighborhood architects, presented site options using a large map so different scenarios could be visualized. The meeting was videotaped, and a summary of the meeting appears on pages 4-5 of the "Whistler." The videotape is available from the council office. Call 349-6287 for information.

Next Meeting of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

Wednesday April 29
7:30 PM Agassiz Community Center
20 Sacramento St. Cambridge MA
Agenda:
7:30 General Business
8:00 Traffic Update
8:30 Agassiz School Update

Please note:
Special April
STREET SWEEPING SCHEDULE
for the Agassiz neighborhood
APRIL 21 Tuesday Even Sides
APRIL 30 Thursday Odd Sides

Neighborhood News
North Hall Construction Update
We have received the following notice of neighborhood improvements to Harvard Law School's North Hall (formerly the Quality Inn) from Happy Green of Community Relations at Harvard:

This spring, Harvard Law School will begin site improvements at North Hall. The removal of the swimming pool will largely be completed during the week of March 23rd. At that time, the sidewalk and parking lot on Mellen Street will be dug up and holes will be cut in the Mass Ave. sidewalk to prepare for the planting of new trees this spring. The new, large community room with kitchen and toilet facilities is currently available to Agassiz Neighborhood Council members until May 26th when installation of the elevator to the community room will begin.

A number of visual and functional improvements will enhance the neighborhood in the following manner. The tall wood fence and brick retaining wall at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Wendell Street will be removed starting near the last week in May as well as the remainder of the pool.

Avon Associates
1675 Mass. Ave.
Apt. Rentals ■ Sales
661-8400
to make way for a wrought iron and brick pier ornamental fence, landscaping and access for persons with disabilities to the community room.

The former parking area along Wendell Street will be transformed into a lawn with some shrubbery and street trees. Most of the existing curb cut will be abandoned and a new curb and sidewalk installed for pedestrian safety. A new masonry canopy at Massachusetts Avenue will define the entrance to the new community room. In addition, an elevator to provide access for disabled persons will be installed next to the new entrance to the community room. The parking lot area will be improved with the addition of shrubbery and ornamental trees and an island of trees in the center of the lot. Four parking spaces will be provided for disabled persons and additional spaces will become available to the Mellen Street residences between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. The parking area along Massachusetts Avenue will be enclosed with a wrought iron and brick pier ornamental fence.

Lastly, in a concerted effort to improve the appearance of the building, a satin finish, dark green paint will be applied as warmer weather approaches. What is currently seen is the prime coat.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Happy Green, Director of Community Relations at Harvard University at 495-4955.

Traffic Update

By now you have been inconvenienced by the construction at the Beacon St. bridge, located at the north end of Oxford St. where it joins Somerville Ave. Construction is being done by the MBTA, who has jurisdiction over it. We spoke to George Conway, MBTA Project Coordinator, who said the scheduled finish date is October. Construction was delayed because permission had to be obtained from the railroad. October is an optimistic deadline, and it may go past that date.

The eastern side of the bridge will be demolished by the time you read this, and construction of the new eastern side should have begun. When that section is complete (estimated 2 months), traffic will be routed to it, and the western side will be demolished and replaced. Traffic will always flow one way toward Somerville Avenue for the duration of the project. Traffic lights will be installed on the Somerville side of the bridge and at Mossland St. The bridge will be enlarged and refigured for a better traffic pattern. Mossland St. may be closed down to use by abutters only, but this is not definite yet.

ANC called the Cambridge DPW, to see who was coordinating the project for Cambridge, and were advised that Cambridge was not involved in this project. We anticipated that Cambridge would use this project to work on some of the Oxford St. issues that could be coordinated with it as had been previously discussed in traffic meetings. We also expected that Cambridge would want to have a hand in this major project that involved so much Cambridge traffic. Astrid Dodds, from the Traffic Committee, agreed to contact the city council and see what role Cambridge will play in this renovation. The Traffic Committee will also take it up with Assistant City Manager Rossi at the meeting they hope to schedule (see below).

The Traffic Committee has written a letter to Assistant City Manager Richard Rossi requesting a meeting in April to deal with the safety issues of Oxford Street using an integrated approach that would coordinate the project among the various departments that must cooperate: police, traffic and parking and DPW departments of Cambridge and Somerville. Issues include pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle safety from the danger of speeding cars, dangerous street crossings, poorly pruned trees that mask signs, and illegal parking at intersections that block visibility.

Preventive and Restorative Dentistry
QUALITY CARE WITH A GENTLE TOUCH

Elliot Kronstein, D.D.S.
492-6070

181 Concord Avenue Cambridge MA
located at the intersection of Huron and Concord
Astrid Dodds of Wendell St. thanks everyone who contacted her with reports of accidents witnessed on the corner of Wendell and Oxford, and for other miscellaneous suggestions people have offered regarding the traffic problem (including the fate of the strawberry truck). If you have more to say, or if you just haven't gotten around to it, call her at 354-6553.

We received a letter from Lauren Preston of the Traffic and Parking Department who says:

We have received your suggestion concerning shorter term parking on Massachusetts Avenue at Wendell Street by the Baybank ATM. We will purchase 10-15 minutes parking meters for installation at this ATM location. We will make all the changes outlined in my letter of December 30, 1991, including the 30 minute parking meters. When the short term meters are received the time limit will be changed and the new meters installed.

Mary Prentiss Inn to Open
Charlotte Forsythe, owner of the new bed and breakfast under renovation on 6 Prentiss St. has provided us with the following information: The Mary Prentiss Inn hopes to open its doors in June. Our reservation phone number is 617-661-2929.

Watch Agassiz News on TV
Cambridge Community TV broadcasts the Cambridge Community News Show every Sunday night on cable Channel 19 at 9 PM. Catch it and get some in depth news and features about the Agassiz neighborhood. We have done two pieces on the renovations to the Agassiz School, and another show on what you can find if you look into the Sacramento St. Gallery, which is a very interesting community art space. In the future, when the weather warms, you should look for a feature on Oxford St. traffic. For more information, or to get involved with the news, call the council at 349-6287.

Fiesta Italiano and Latino Carnival
The Cambridge Arts Council will present the second annual Cambridge International Fair: "Discovery in Central Square" on Saturday June 13 from 11 AM until 8 PM at University Park in Central Square. It will be highlighted by an Italian street fair, and it will close with a Latino carnival. There will be six international stages, street performers, crafts and food.
To see how you can get involved call Lindsay McCoy at 349-4380.

City Wide News and Information
A Step Toward Safe Neighborhood
Police Commissioner Perry Anderson, with the help of many individuals and departments in Cambridge, developed an information packed 21 page booklet entitled "Cambridge Safe Neighborhoods Initiative-Organizing Packet." This is filled with information for anyone in Cambridge who would like to organize a block watch. It contains information on dialing 911, use of drug hot lines, crime statistics information and more.
Anyone who would like to have an up to date listing of all the neighborhood groups in the city, divided by neighborhood and special interest area could use this book. There is also a city department telephone directory, a Cambridge Police telephone directory, and it is free to you. Either stop in the council office at 20 Sacramento St., or give us a call at 349-6287, and we will mail you one.

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We accept most major third party prescription plans, including:
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Free Delivery Competitive Prices
Agassiz School Building Update

March Neighborhood Council Meeting Summary

At its March 19 meeting, the Agassiz Neighborhood Council invited community response to the recommendations of the Agassiz School Task Force Report. Susan Sills and David Chilinski led the discussion. Susan is a neighborhood representative on the Task Force and David is a member of the ANC Board of Directors. Both are architects. The purpose of the discussion was to determine community reaction to the alternatives included in the report.

Susan began the discussion by summarizing the February 24 Task Force meeting with the City Manager, reporting that the City Manager appeared open to community involvement. She outlined the issues to be considered at the present meeting. One is if the school should remain at its present site, enlarged by taking one or two adjacent lots on Sacramento St. or if it should be relocated. If the site is enlarged, where should the houses on those lots be moved to? Another question is whether the current school building should be renovated or torn down.

Taking adjacent land

David explained that expanding onto adjacent lots wasn’t a possibility at the time of the original feasibility study but that Harvard, owner of those two lots, is willing to discuss swapping land and moving houses. He pointed out that moving the houses would be disruptive not only for the families but for the neighborhood as well. Doing that, however, would allow for the 60,000 sq ft. building required for the new school and would provide playspace next to the school. The resulting new construction would facilitate greater efficiency of design than working within the old structure which would require 4 stories in some areas. All the plans to be presented include parking for 21-22 cars as required by building size.

If the school expands onto the lot immediately adjacent, three possible locations for that house were suggested: 1) the hardtop area of the playground; 2) all or part of the community gardens site; or 3) Sacramento field. Everyone at the meeting objected to the last two options.

Moving the house to the hardtop raised concerns about disrupting the dynamic between the playground and the stores across the street and about the fact that the basketball courts are currently used by the school kids. Renovation of Sacramento field to situate the basketball courts closer to the school was suggested. It was pointed out that rooftop playspace was included in all of the design plans, although not as a replacement of ground level playspace.

Positive effects of moving the house to the hardtop would be that separating the tot lot from the school makes it more available for neighborhood use and that placement of houses on corner lots enhances a neighborhood.

Taking over both lots next to the school provides the most flexibility for construction or renovation and allows for the lowest possible structure. The question is where to place the second house. The community gardens and Sacramento field were already rejected as unacceptable.

The MBTA site at the corner of Garfield St. and Mass. Ave. might be a good location but the city is negotiating with the MBTA to obtain the site and is committed to building affordable housing there. Furthermore, the site is not entirely suitable for building because of underground tunnels and vents.

Placing the house where the Cambridge Guidance Center is or on the parking lot is less attractive but is a good location for the proposed-re-location of their homes. One of those residents was in attendance and showed the group a letter signed by all the adults in the two houses stating that some of them had lived in those houses for over twenty years and that moving them would be a disruption for their families and for the neighborhood.

It was suggested that the city be more active in dealing with the owner of the Oxford St. property on the Wendell St. side of the school for possible expansion in that direction. This would place the
school on what is already a busier street. However, the owners have been approached and are not willing to deal with the city and the city does not want to take property by eminent domain because of costly legal battles which have occurred in the past.

The question was also raised if it was a good thing for the neighborhood to have a bigger school. Several people commented that they felt a bigger school would destroy the neighborhood aesthetic. Someone asked if the school had been given historical landmark status. It was explained that the Historical Commission had decided to hold off on making a determination until the community makes a statement as to what it wants as a solution. Concern was raised that if the community decided to tear the building down, the Commission would "close its eyes."

It was also pointed out that generally, renovation is much more costly than new construction and that the state won't finance renovation in such a case. The city is counting on state money to build the new school.

The consensus of the group was that moving one house was a difficult enough proposition and that moving two houses was an unacceptable solution.

**Re-locating the school**

The next option to be discussed was re-locating the school. Three sites were suggested: Sacramento field; the lot that the Cambridge Guidance Center is on; and the MBTA site at Garfield St. and Mass. Ave. Each possibility presents problems.

Sacramento field is owned by the city and so would not require any swap of land, however community sentiment is opposed to losing the field as a park. Concerns about access were also raised.

The Cambridge Guidance Center building and lot are owned by Harvard and would require a swap, probably for the school and its site. The neighborhood then loses control over future use and preservation of the building. It was also observed that there would then be two very large buildings on Sacramento St. Furthermore, Harvard would own a string of property on Sacramento St. without neighborhood control over what they do with them.

Problems with the MBTA site are the same as with moving a house there.

Re-locating the school also raises the question of historical preservation of the building on which there was not consensus at the meeting. Susan informed the group that the city manager's office has told her that Harvard would not be interested in the building if it received historical status (a relevant fact if a swap is considered). Preserving both the interior and exterior of the building for community use other than a school received general support from people at the meeting. However it was pointed out that the space would considerably larger than what is now used for the Agassiz community center and the city would probably want to use such a large space for city-wide programs, including a teen center.

**Creating an annex**

Another option is to maintain the current school building and build an annex at another location. This could be achieved in several ways: K-3, 4 or 5 at Agassiz and 6-8 at another site either in the neighborhood or in another area; K-3, 4 or 5 at Agassiz and 6-8 designated at another Cambridge school; or mixed grades at both Agassiz and the annex.

Issues raised included whether separating kids by grades is a good idea; increased costs due to duplication of physical plant and administrative services; and whether the school department would be open to the idea. The point was raised if the Agassiz were renovated but not expanded the state wouldn't fund it. However, one resident said that Mayor Wolf had told the community that the state could be flexible with its guidelines and that the community should hold her to her word on that. It was observed that enrollment in Agassiz decreases at the 6th grade and one resident questioned whether there was a need for a 6-8 school in the neighborhood.

Although locating a site for an annex would present some of the same difficulties as finding a site for a new school this plan was preferred by many at the meeting.

**Lesley College proposes building a school**

It was announced that the city has been approached by Lesley College about building a school on their property. Details are expected to be made public in several weeks. At the moment it is guessed that the site might be somewhere between Wendell and Everett Sts. Lesley needs a lab school and it is assumed that they are interested in developing a relationship with the city based on fulfilling that need.

While this would solve the problem of where to build the school it raises other issues. In the past, Lesley has been insensitive to neighborhood concerns and people wondered if the building anticipated is more than just a school. The area is in an institutional zone and there would be few restrictions on size.
ATTENTION: DPW CAN WRITE YOU A TICKET
Please review the ticket below to see the violations and fines that can be issued to you if you are in violation. Note that these tickets are issued by members of the Department of Public Works. A hot line is being set up for residents to report violations, and we hope to have that hot line number available in May.

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☐ Unable to obtain signature of offender
☐ A1 Unlicensed Dog $25
☐ A2 Unrestrained Dog $25
☐ A3 Dog License Not Attached $25
☐ A4 Improper Disposal of Dog Feces $25
☐ H1 Smoking Prohibition $25
☐ P1 Litter on Private Property $25
☐ P2 Litter from Commercial-Nonprofit $25
☐ P3 Litter by Pedestrian Public $25
☐ P4 Litter by Pedestrian Private $25
☐ P5 Rubbish Out Before 7 A.M. $25

☐ Date Mailed
☐ P6 Display of Merchandise $25
☐ P7 Maintenance of Sidewalks & Private Property $25
☐ P8 Sidewalks-Snow and Ice Removal $25
☐ P9 Recycle $25
☐ N1 Noise Control $25

☐ 21 Other $10

Total of Fine(s) Due $10

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The Whistler April 1992

Council Programs
ENROLLING NOW for spring term, summer camp and all fall programs
Call 349-6287

ON STAGE AND OFF is a new program that gives 10-14 year old students a summer course in performing arts. It will be directed by Carol Hantman as the summer component of the Agassiz Afterschool Players. This program will run at the Agassiz School between June 29 and July 31 from 1 to 5 PM. It will give participants some experience in stage craft, scenery design and other adjunct dramatic activities as well as work on acting technique using improvisation and exercises in voice and body control.

Outback Summer Camp has always provided a drama experience for younger school age children, and now there will be an age appropriate opportunity for older participants.

OUTBACK SUMMER CAMP is now enrolling participants. This program provides eight weeks of day camp for school age children. Children may sign up for any number of weeks, from 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM. Extended day hours are available until 5:30 PM. It offers drama, arts, sports, weekly beach trips, and more. It is run by well trained professionals, many of whom are on staff in the Agassiz Afterschool programs.

Afterschool (part and full time) and Preschool programs are registering now for the spring term and preregistering for the fall. To learn about the variety of programs we provide for children and youth from 2.5 years of age - 14 years of age, call the council at 349-6287.

North Hall Needs furniture and a PIANO!

Our Community Room at North Hall needs a piano so we can provide musical instruction and recital space beginning this fall. IF YOU HAVE A PIANO YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE, PLEASE CALL TERRY DELANCEY AT 349-6287. We will do all the work to move it, and we will furnish you with a very nice tax deduction.

We also seek dollar donations to purchase 45 chairs and 8 tables which should provide us with the basics for programs and meetings. We also hope to install some wall covering for sound enhancement and wall protection.
There will be an Open House on May 20 in our new space, and you can see the room for yourself. Look for details in the May Whistler. We will host Agassiz neighborhood council meetings there beginning in September. The 5-8th grade afterschool classes are already using the space. We hope to program many interesting new things in that space, and we hope that you will give us your suggestions for uses. We would also like your ideas to help name the room.

If you would like to help us, please send your tax deductible donations to the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, 30 Community Room Fund, 20 Sacramento St., Cambridge MA 02138. For more information, call Terry Delaney at 349-6287.

Ads and Announcements

Cambridge Community Television presents a Summer Video Institute for Cambridge residents ages 13-18. The institute offers three two week long intensive sessions in video production, one in Studio Production, limited to 12 participants, another in basic Remote Production, limited to 8 participants, and a new Advanced Remote Production limited to 6 participants. Each session will produce a videotape that will be shown on CCTV's Channel 19. Tuition includes a year long membership to CCTV. The cost is $160 per session, and the location is One Kendall Square. For more information, please call 225-2500.

For the joy and the art of music, PIANO LESSONS.
For you, for your children, in your own home. Agassiz parent Adrienne Caddell Hopkins will come anywhere in the Agassiz neighborhood for your convenience. 15 years teaching experience. 1/2 hour lesson 12.50, 45 min. lesson 17.50, 1 hr lesson 22.50. Call 493-4084.

YOGA CLASSES SPRING 1992 SCHEDULE
All classes in The Yoga Experience are held in 12 week sessions taught by Danielle Levi Alvares at the Kripalu Yoga Studio, 25 Carver St. For every age and condition. For more information and fees call 354-5118.
*Monday, April 27 6-7:15 PM
*Tuesday, April 28 12:30-1:45 PM and 6:7:15 PM
*Thursday, April 30 8:30-9:45 AM and 6-7:15 PM

Agassiz Students Win Drama Contest
Two Agassiz students (and Agassiz Afterschool Players participants) win a city wide award for their original play. Congratulations to Bushra Makiya and Sasha Warner-Berry who competed with students from all over Cambridge for this award. Their prize includes a residency by the Studebaker Mime Co. in Mrs. Berger's 4/5 classroom.

Cultural Happenings

At the Sacramento St. Gallery
Heidi Tobler will show her work through April 24 in the Sacramento St. Gallery which will be open weekdays from 9 AM to 5 PM. She presents paintings and small sculptures.

PLAYWRIGHTS PLATFORM PRESENTS
Playwrights Platform will present an April reading at the Agassiz Community Center located at 20 Sacramento St. At 7:30 on April 26 we will hear Eliza Wyatt's "Blue Sky Thinking". She is a prize winning playwright whose work has been produced in NY. and London. Admission is free and the public is invited.

AAP Thanks Volunteers
The Agassiz Afterschool Players premiered two original dramas, "The Case of the Empty Case" and "You Better Not Tell," and one original musical "Revue 92" on the weekend of March 21st.

The players want to thank the following people for their assistance in making the March production a success: Mark Schuster, Marla Paz Avery, Jody Garber, and Alexandra Antic.
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<tr>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>2-4 PM</td>
<td>Painting and Small Sculptures by Heidi Tobler</td>
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**APRIL 1992**

The Whistler  
Agassiz Neighborhood Council  
20 Sacramento St.  
Cambridge, MA 02138    349-6287

DO NOT FORWARD

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council thanks the MASSACHUSETTS Cultural Council supporting public programs in the arts, humanities, and sciences for their generous support to the arts programs for students in grades 5-8.

*The Whistler* is printed on 100% recycled and recyclable paper.