ANC News

Notes from the January 23 ANC Meeting

Board member Janet Rustow chaired the January meeting. There were two items for discussion:

The Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAA) has been locking their gates before the posted time, sometimes not opening one gate at all. Margaret Moore spoke for pedestrians who walk across the grounds only to find a locked gate, and must retrace their steps. Neighbors who use the grounds asked if the ANC would write a letter to the Academy requesting that they adhere to their posted open times. [AAA has since agreed to keep gates open]

Astrid Dodds remembered back to the development of that site for the Academy, and said that use of the grounds was a firm agreement at the time (late 70’s) which should still be in force. Richard Griffin, who sits on the Harvard-Joint Neighborhood Committee agreed to see what could be done to improve the access for neighbors.

Sacramento St. as a snow emergency route was discussed, and since Traffic Commissioner Sue Clippinger and Assistant DPW Commissioner Steve White were on hand, we had ready answers. A Sacramento St. resident believed that since no towing or ticketing was done on the street, it might not be necessary to post it as an emergency route.

Both Commissioners said that tickets were given all over Cambridge. Steve suggested that the Snow Hot Line could be called (349-4903) to get enforcement on any street. However, the extent of the snow and other problems during the recent storms put such a strain on resources, everything was not done that should have been. They added that in this kind of emergency they are reluctant to tow, but not to ticket.

Sue said that decisions on priorities are made with other departments and based on several factors, particularly police, fire and emergency vehicular access. Sacramento is a secondary route. She added that the route could be reassessed for snow emergency status.

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

Exciting ideas for Oxford Street renovations were the main topic of the night, and that portion of the meeting was chaired by Traffic Committee Chair David Valenstein. Steve White made some remarks on the Sewer Project, which is an Agassiz opportunity to refigure streets. When the work is done, the streets must be put back together again anyway.

Steve explained that the sewer project must drive the street renovations. The streets must drain with gravity to the Charles River, which will impose certain limitations on various kinds of street designs. He said the first sewer job will begin as a separate piece this spring on Sacramento St. (between Mass. Ave. and Oxford St.) at the cost of $800,000. The major part of the Agassiz work should begin in the spring of 1997 and proceed though the neighborhood to the Somerville line. He has increased the size of the proposed pipes since the first engineering study was done, and he hopes to work with Somerville to deal with the flooding problems that occur on Beacon Street in the vicinity of the Star Market.

Cara Seideman from Community Development, Environmental and Transportation Planning Division, presented an excellent slide show with many examples of “traffic calming” taken from the U.S. in Berkeley, Boston, Cambridge and Boulder as well as other European examples from England and Denmark.

She explained a few basics. Traffic goes much faster if a road is straight and wide (and one way). Traffic

NEXT
ANC Meeting
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 20
7:30 p.m.
AGASSIZ SCHOOL DINING ROOM
28 Sacramento St. Entrance

AGENDA:
Guest Alan Fein will discuss Lesley College Issues
Traffic Survey Update
calming often relies on narrowing or curving the roadway. Sometimes the street is simply designed to look more narrow or less straight. The majority of examples used creative barriers such as trees, bump outs (extending the sidewalk out at corners as in the drawing of Oxford St. above), and moveable signs. Street paving and painting was used to create curves on an otherwise straight street. Speed humps (not bumps) were illustrated to provide a gentle change of pavement elevation. Cobblestones are effective in many ways, but, as with bricks, not always good for people using wheelchairs or baby carriages.

After the slides participants were enthusiastic about a process to develop a creative plan to calm Oxford St. traffic. Goals will be articulated that state residents needs for Oxford street in order to plan successfully.

Neighbors must be polled to learn the individual needs and problems on all Agassiz streets so a plan can be developed that really works for everyone in the community. This will require far more feedback from residents than the participants at this meeting, but the group was confident that a wide group could be reached and included in this process. [Go to page 7 for a survey that will help incorporate YOUR IDEAS and CONCERNS into the planning process !!!]

Cara had many books and references that will be made available in the Community Center at 20 Sacramento St. People are welcome to stop in and look at the materials which have many good ideas. Please call 349-6287 to receive notice of the activities of or to join this exciting group. There will be another meeting with City officials in March or April.

Just a final reminder to everyone that any plan must take into consideration the demands of the sewer project, which will get the water off our streets (and basements and cars and homes).

Meanwhile send in your survey! Call Terry DeLancey at 349-6287 for more information.

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**Neighborhood News**

**Porter Square Plans Unveiled**

At the January 18 regular monthly meeting of the Porter Square Neighbors Association (PSNA), the management team representing the Porter Square Shopping Center unveiled its preliminary design concepts for renovations to the shopping center.

The proposal includes major upgrades in landscaping, reconfiguration of the parking lot, doubling the width of the existing sidewalks, and updated facades, signage, and lighting. A new buildings has been proposed for the corner of White Street and Somerville Ave., offering 12,000 sq ft of retail space on two stories. Adjacent to the proposed building, the owners would like to develop an incubator space to help local entrepreneurs launch start-up businesses. The owners are also committed to providing space for community activities and plan to name a permanent liaison to coordinate its programming.

The PSNA will continue in the months ahead to work with the design team to make sure that the that the voice of the neighbors influences the design. Then, when a near-final plan is ready for public comment (perhaps by mid-spring), it will sponsor a second public meeting for reaction, questions, and so on.

Only then, according to the management team, will they begin seeking the necessary permits to begin construction.

A report entitled "Envision Porter Square" has been provided to the ANC from PSNA. It contains "the collected wisdom of several hundred Porter Square residents, business owners and other interested parties." The PSNA is using this report to inform and guide its work with the developers going forward.
PSNA welcomes all who are interested in improving the quality of life in Porter Square to work with them. Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month (February 15) in the Metropolitan Baptist Church, 16 Beech St., Cambridge from 7-9 PM.

For more information about the Porter Square Neighbors Association, call its new automated information line at 576-3542 or send e-mail to PorterSNA@aol.com.

Traffic and Transportation

Exciting things are happening in planning for Oxford Street. See our page one story for more information. A survey can be found on page 7. Please fill it out and return.

Do You Know Where YOUR STORM DRAINS are?

In case of street flooding after snow, it is very helpful to advise the DPW where the drains are located in order to unblock them. Better yet, if a drain is near your home, dig it out and keep it clear so water can drain. If there is a problem, call the DPW and help them locate the drains.

SNOW SHOVELING OPTIONS

There are various sources for snow shovellers. The best advice is to think ahead - before the snow. Most landscapers do snow removal when it storms, and they can be located in the yellow pages. You can also try the yellow pages under "snow removal services". This is reliable over a long period of time and can be set up to happen automatically, even if you are away.

The Department of Human Services (349-6228) can provide you with Cambridge youth to shovel for a reasonable fee, and the Council on Aging (349-6220) may be able to provide you with free shoveling if you meet their requirements.

We have post cards to remind neighbors to shovel with information on finding help with shoveling. You can pick them up in the Community Center at 20 Sacramento St. and pass them out to non-shoveling neighbors. If that friendly reminder fails, you can call the Snow Hot Line at 349-4903, and report unshovelled addresses.

Traffic Lights to Cycle as Requested

Traffic Committee was promised by the City Traffic Department that when Oxford St. reopened that the traffic lights at Forest and Sacramento on Oxford St. would cycle all the time, rather than remain green on Oxford until traffic came along on the side streets.

The City has honored that request, and the lights are now cycling as requested.

Correction

Susana Segat's name was misspelled in the January Whistler - Sorry, Susana, for the error!

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Agassiz Community School

For information and to register, contact Jody Garber, Program Director, at 349-6287 for all listed activities.

AGASSIZ AFTERSCHOOL
SACRAMENTO ST. PRESCHOOL
Ongoing registration. Many activities and options available. Call for a brochure or to visit.

OUTBACK SUMMER CAMP
Call for information which will be mailed out sometime in March.

EVENING PROGRAMS
NEW in February
Adult Cooking Class

A MID-WINTER ITALIAN MEAL
Join us for an evening of gourmet cooking and camaraderie. Learn to make a typical Italian meal of risotto, salad, biscotti and more. Taught by Lisa Beaudin, a chef at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, class will take place from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the kitchen of the Agassiz School. Cost: $20 includes ingredients.

NEW March Special Event
FAMILY CONTRA DANCING MARCH 1
See CULTURAL HAPPENINGS page 6

YOGA class considered
Are you interested in an evening class in Yoga either on Monday or Wednesday night? Please call Jody (see above) to express interest.

Ongoing . . .
Monday-Drop in Teen Basketball. 6-7:30 p.m.
Wednesday-Drop in Adult Basketball. 6-9 p.m.
Agassiz School. Admission $1.

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The Whistler February 1996

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Lesley College

AIDS AWARENESS WEEK at Lesley Feb 4-9

Sunday, 2/4    Jeffrey, based on the play by Paul Rudnick
    Starring Stephen Webber, Sigourney Weaver
    and Patrick Stewart
    Welch Auditorium 7:00 p.m.

Monday 2/5      Living On by Lois Roach (a Lesley Alum.)
    an AIDS awareness theater production
    Welch Auditorium 7:15 p.m.

Tuesday 2/6     Interfaith Service of Memory and Hope
    Multipurpose Room 7:15 p.m.

Wednesday 2/7   AIDS Action Committee Speaker
    Multipurpose Room 6:00 p.m.

Thursday 2/8    "How to Talk to Kids About AIDS"
    an interactive workshop for parents and teachers presented by the
    Red Cross - Lesley Gym 5:00-6:30 p.m.
    Festival of Film Shorts: Four 30 min. films
    Student Center Noon and 7 p.m.

Friday 2/9      Rock Benefit for AIDS - Featuring:
    SenseSurround, Spool, Miles dethmuffin &
    Ellie Marshall (from the Modern Lovers)
    Lesley Cafeteria 8-11 p.m.
    Donation at the door

For more information contact
Erik Rosengren at 349-8509

Agassiz Thanks Lesley
Mellen St. neighbors have called and asked us to thank
Lesley for shovelling Mellen Street and removing the snow from
the big storm last month.

Attention Deficit Disorder in the
Workplace and the Classroom

On Monday, February 12 from 4-5:30 p.m., Edward
Hallowell, M.D., co-author of the national best seller
Driven to Distraction, will provide an overview of Attention
Deficit Disorder. Implications for supervisors, employees,
teachers, and students will be considered. Free and open to the
public.
Agassiz Public School

Mrs. Paddock to Retire

Mrs. Paddock, Agassiz School Principal, advised the school community of her retirement plans in a January 23 letter. She cites “personal and health reasons, a husband patiently retired for seven years, and a commitment to new grandchildren”... as well as “twenty five years in education”.

The process for selecting a new principal will be discussed at the next Agassiz School Council meeting in February.

Maria Baldwin Plaque

The Historical Commission will provide the Agassiz School with an outdoor plaque in honor of Maria Louise Baldwin, teacher and headmistress of the Agassiz School 1889-1922, as well as first female African-American Headmistress in all New England. This will be one of the African-American Historic Marker Series.

The plaque is an 18” square steel piece with a porcelain enamel silk screen. There will be a picture of Miss Baldwin and text about her life.

There will be a celebration at the Agassiz School in February, date TBA. If you are interested in information on this event, call the council at 349-6287.

Lights in the New School Parking Lot

ANC received several calls and messages about plans to place lights in the new school parking lot located on Oxford Street directly next to the Tot Lot. Most people were concerned that all night lighting would be too bright inside their homes. This information has been referred to the architects with a recommendation that any light be on a timer or placed low enough not to disturb neighbors.

Announcements

VOLUNTEER FOR VALENTINES

On February 14 HEALTHWORKS FITNESS CENTERS will be joining forces with The Big Sister Association of Greater Boston to help promote “Do Something Good for your Heart-Recruitment Drive “96”.

HEALTHWORKS will host a representative from the Big Sister Association for an orientation session at 6:30 p.m. to be followed by a special master class at 7:00 p.m. Come and learn about volunteer opportunities, try a class or use equipment, and enjoy refreshments and meeting with other interested Cambridge area women. HEALTHWORKS is located in Porter Square Shopping Center next to TAGS. You must be 20 years of age to participate. If you are interested in the master class, please call 497-4484 to sign up.

For Sale and Needed

DP Concours Treadmill Series 10.5 2HP 10 miles per hour upper body workout, was $999 new, carries a 2 year warranty in home as well worth $180. For sale $500 negotiable.

Snow shoveller needed to dig out cars. Call Joyce 547-0909.

DON'T THROW THAT SLIDE PROJECTOR AWAY!

The Agassiz Afterschool could use it. Call Mike at 4974284. Donations are tax deductible!

Seniors

Health Insurance Questions Answered

Do you have any questions or concerns about your health insurance? If so, please come to a discussion of Medicare, Medigap and H.M.O.’s presented by the Cambridge Council on Aging and SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of the Elderly) on THURSDAY FEBRUARY 8 AT 1:00 P.M. at the Cambridge Senior Center, 2050 Mass. Ave. OR THURSDAY FEBRUARY 15 AT 1:00 P.M. at the Cambridge Senior Center, 806 Mass. Ave. Central Square

New Agassiz Resident

Music and Movement Classes for ages 1-4
Piano Lessons
Call Sara Binding Licentiate
Royal Academy of Music, London
Call 547-7597
Cultural Happenings

Vacation Week Hip Hop Sampler

On Thursday February 22 at 2:00 p.m. hip hop dancers will be on stage in the Agassiz School bringing us a sample of local hip hop from Boston and Cambridge groups. This program is part of the Introducing Art Performance Series, and it features a variety of hip hop groups that will perform for school age children. An MC will introduce the groups that include: A.N.U., B.T.M. Academy, Tuff Assignment, Cleverly Put Together, Jamnastics, Next Generation, Upn' Jammin’, Pro Junior Co. and Deep Senior Co. from Dreamers Inc.

Hip hop is a lively urban based dance form, usually performed by youth, with a strong rhythmic sound. This performance is presented by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council and funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Admission is $1. For more information call 349-6287.

CONTRA DANCING MARCH 1 AT AGASSIZ

Agassiz Neighborhood Council will host a family contra dance night on Friday, March 1 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Agassiz School Dining Hall. Everyone interested in contra dancing is welcome, including children. Admission is free, just bring a dessert.

The caller will be Joel Breazale, and the musicians will be Sally McKnight, Jake Kensinger, and Ellen Schmidt on the dulcimer, flute, bass, guitar and vocals. There will be a pot luck dessert following the dancing.

PLEASE: Parents must be responsible for their children, and children must be accompanied by adults.

For more information call 349-6287.

Folk Dancing in the Old Agassiz School Circa 1918

Peal: Poetry Events At Lesley PRESENTS:

What's Up in Poetry: Patricia Smith, Boston Globe Columnist & Playwright

Wednesday February 7 at 7 p.m. Alumni Hall

For information call Peggy Barraso 349-8467.

Singers needed for Porter Square Volunteer Choir

Join us for fellowship, fun and refreshments as we rehearse to sing to the glory of God. North-Prospect Church (UCC) welcomes sopranos, altos, tenors and basses into their choir. Rehearsals are Sundays at 9:30 a.m. for the 11:00 o'clock worship service. For more information please call Christian Carey, Music Director (562-0306).

FRESH POND BALLET
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- Classical Ballet
- Pre-Ballet to pre-professional
- Adult Classes

Sacramento Street Gallery
20 Sacramento St.

"CLAYWORKS" by Tina Hilsdon
from February 10 through 29.
Opening February 11 from 3:00-6:00 p.m.
THE ANC NEEDS TO HEAR SOON from as many residents as possible about their ideas and opinions. The City needs to hear from US to start work on the designs for neighborhood streets. Here are currently identified GOALS for street reconstruction after sewer work:

- Ensure adequate storm drainage
- Slow traffic down
- Improve visibility for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers
- Repair sidewalks
- Reconfigure Oxford Street at the Beacon St. end
- Make Oxford a neighborhood oriented street
- Enhance the pedestrian environment, with a special look at issues for children
- Make bicycling safe and pleasant
- Minimize loss of parking space

What are your overall goals for the neighborhood environment?

ART CLASSES
Carolyn Boriss-Krinsky, artist, registered art therapist and licensed mental health counselor is providing art classes and art therapy sessions for children in her neighborhood studio during after school hours. For more information call 547-8444

Your Neighborhood Realtor

Elizabeth Browning
For Your Real Estate Needs

1730 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
864-4430 x 354

Return TRAFFIC Survey to:
ANC, Traffic Survey
20 Sacramento St. Cambridge 02138
E-Mail: 74372.1770@compuserve.com
FAX: 497-4388

What do you think could improve YOUR STREET, or any street in Agassiz? (be specific as to locations)

What are the concerns you observe on Agassiz streets? (in terms of flooding, bicycling, driving, walking, etc.)

Do you have goals to add to the list, or do you disagree with any?

Any other comments are welcome. (Feel free to add pages.) All responses will be available for public review in the Community Center at 20 Sacramento St. and forwarded to City officials.
THE FEBRUARY WHISTLER - Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council
COMMUNITY CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 1996

February 14, Wednesday
Valentine’s Day

February 15, Thursday
7:00-9:00 p.m.
Porter Square Neighbors Association
Metropolitan Baptist Church; 16 Beech St.

February 19-23
Cambridge Public School Vacation Week

February 20, Tuesday
6:30 p.m.
ANC Board Meeting (Open to the Public)

7:30 p.m.
ANC Monthly Meeting (see agenda page 1)
Agassiz School, 28 Sacramento St. Entrance

February 22, Thursday
2:00 p.m.
Hip Hop Dance Sampler- Admission $1
A performance for school age children
Agassiz School, 28 Sacramento St. Entrance

March 1, Friday
7:00-9:00 p.m.
Contra Dancing- Dining Hall
Agassiz School, 28 Sacramento St. Entrance

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The Whistler is published monthly September - June by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, distribution 2,000. Neighborhood residents may be added to the mailing list by calling 349-6287. Items of interest to the Agassiz neighborhood may be submitted for consideration to address below, no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication date.

FEBRUARY 1996
Agassiz Neighborhood Council
20 Sacramento St.
Cambridge, MA 02138  349-6287

DO NOT FORWARD

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