In This Issue

Snow Removal Info ............... 2
Oxford Street Closing ........... 2
Rent Control Update ............ 3
Agassiz Floor Plans .............. 4-5
Agassiz Construction .......... 6

ANC Notes

From the 12/20 Meeting ...

ANC Chair JoAnn Hoffman opened the meeting and asked if anyone had issues for the next council meeting. Tenants felt that rent control must be discussed again in January. She then introduced Jo Anne Preston and Randy Fenster Macher, Co-Chairs of the Agassiz Tenants Association. Jo Anne updated us on the situation which changes from day to day. She explained the current court battle, which could rule the election questions that are related to laws invalid. See the Information on Rent Control, below for the most current information on the situation.

Many tenants facing rent increases were present and told their situations and concerns regarding their continued status as Cambridge residents. Jo Anne noted that for many tenants this is a real emergency and that the neighborhood would feel an enormous change if rent control is lost. Agassiz is at great risk for large rent increases.

There was also discussion from the tenants regarding threats and illegal notice for rent increases. If the law does go into effect, notices of rent increases are not legal until after the first of the year.

JoAnn advised us of materials being put together by volunteers that include information on eviction procedures and code violations, form letters to respond to landlords and more. They will be available at the offices the ANC, please call 349-6287.

Cambridge City Councillor Kathy Born helped to further explain the court battle. She advised us of various attempts she had made through Cambridge City Council to obtain help, including legal consultation, for tenants, which are not so far available.

Packets will be available and may be picked up in the Agassiz Community Center which explain various steps tenants can take to protect themselves. For information call 349-6287.

JoAnn Hoffman publicly thanked Janet Rustow for her attention to the matter of the Agassiz School bus late arrival problem. Thanks to her efforts the bus now comes on time to the Agassiz stop.

The second half of the meeting was devoted to Agassiz School Construction and chaired by Janet Rustow. Guests included Rich Meidros of the Department of Public Works who is in charge of snow removal. Also visiting was Frank Marino of Eastern Construction, contractor for the Agassiz School.

The ANC thanks additional Donors:
Leslie and John Akula, Dr. Roberta Cohen, Mimi and Paul Ezust, Charles Wolf and Linda Preston, Leona Vogt, Mary and Masatoshi Nagatomi

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

Rent Control Hot Line 349-4636

The Rent Control Board is still alive and well as of this writing. They have set up a hot line for anyone who needs assistance.

They have advised the ANC that a packet of information has been sent out to tenants and landlords to help them deal with various problems. Check with the Rent Control Board if you have not received your information yet. Have any questions or need assistance with rent control issues.

The council was assured that the snow will be removed. Rich was advised that in the past the tot lot sidewalk across from the school was not plowed, nor was the sidewalk in front of Sacramento St. Garden. Since the tot lot side will be the only sidewalk near the school, he was told this year it will be critical that it be plowed.

We were given a brief update on construction. Eastern needed two cranes for erecting the last of three 30,000 lb. steel pieces for the gym ceiling. Steel erection will be finished soon.

Masonry will begin in January through early spring. The building will be sheathed so the neighborhood will see little of the workmen, but there will be many of them. They will be using Oxford Street for the masonry staging in order to make the wide variety of bricks readily available to masons for speedy and efficient work.

Concerns brought up at the meeting included an obstruction which blocked the sidewalk on the accessible side of Oxford St. The contractor said this was a new manhole being developed by the electric company. There was general concern about the enforcement of traffic regulations, particularly speeding on the detour section of Sacramento, Carver and Wendell. Concern was voiced again regarding the poor drainage around the detour, specifically at the Beacon St. end of Oxford. It was requested of Rich that the potholes and depressions on Sacramento be fixed.

[These concerns were reported by ANC to the City Manager's Office.]

Next Meeting of the
Agassiz Neighborhood Council
January 17, Tuesday
Community Room
1651 Mass. Ave. (at Wendell St.)
7:30 p.m.
Agenda: General Business, Rent Control Update
Neighborhood News

New Afterschool in Neighborhood

The Cambridge Youth Guidance Center’s Therapeutic After-School Program moved from its basement quarters at 5 Sacramento St. this fall. Now it is housed in a sunny new space on the second floor of 1680A Mass. Ave. above the previous Acropolis, soon to be Frazier’s.

Children and parents have decided to rename it the “Family Afterschool Program.” Twenty children and their families have participated in the program since its inception. Activities focus on behaviors, consequences, and peer and adult relationships while remaining fun and recreational like those of other after schools.

Snow and Ice Removal

The Department of Public Works has developed a 33 page manual with much useful information regarding what to do when it snows. Below you will find some useful information from the manual:

**HOW THE AVERAGE CITIZEN CAN HELP**

* Keep your sidewalk clear of snow and ice
* Clear pedestrian ramps at corner
* Clear snow from catch basins
* Keep cars 20’ from corners
* Keep fire hydrants clear
* Cars illegally parked will be ticketed and towed
* Don’t forget what side of street you may park on during snow emergencies

REMEmBER TO SHOVEL SIDEWALKS

* Property owners are responsible for clearing snow from the sidewalk within twelve hours after snow ceases to fall
* During the day and before 1 p.m. after a snowfall. Ice must be covered with sand, salt or other suitable substance six hours after the sidewalk becomes covered with ice. Failure to comply will result in a warning for the first offense and then a $25 per day fine. Citizens are encouraged to help enforce this ordinance by calling 349-4800, 4960, 4962.

More Tips and Information

Share your driveway with neighbors for maximum plowing. It is unlawful to reserve spaces with trash barrels, etc. Sand is available at libraries, police and most fire stations. Arteries and main streets receive immediate attention. Secondary streets are cleared after main streets. Snow emergencies are called when 6” or more is predicted.

Oxford Street Stays Closed

Eastern Contractors has gained approval to keep Oxford Street between Sacramento and Wendell closed through March. Although steel erection work by the crane has been completed, the construction company felt the space at Oxford Street was necessary for staging during the next phase of construction.

In late November the contractor for the Agassiz School, Eastern, requested the closing of Oxford Street be extended through March. Originally the street closing was requested until December to accommodate the crane required to erect the steel. The Oxford St. space for staging would allow the contractor to speed up the work. Truck deliveries will be done more efficiently from Oxford Street, and some of the pressure could be relieved from Sacramento St., providing more safety and convenience.

The ANC was contacted by the City Manager’s Office to find out if that request would be honored by the neighborhood. A poll was immediately sent out to fifty-six community members, all of whom had attended meetings regarding the Agassiz construction. The poll, to which 24 people responded via the mail and the hot line, revealed that the wide majority were in favor of keeping Oxford Street closed if it would speed up the job and if it would ensure a greater safety margin. The inconvenience of the detour
City Wide

Cambridge Growth Policy

We received an update on the Cambridge Growth Policy, Toward a Sustainable Future, too late for the December Whistler. The policy was developed last year by the Community Development Department (CDD) and in October, after four public hearings, a Committee of the City Council presented its report and recommendations. In November the City Council adopted it as an interim Growth Policy. The committee's report recommended that CDD develop a final policy that maximizes public participation with a non-binding referendum in the 97 municipal election to seek public approval. They recommend that the policy be more comprehensive and include education, health, human services, finance, workforce development, the arts, population density and diversity, energy, infrastructure, environment and public safety.

The Cambridge Community Development Department will continue to keep us up to date on this lengthy process.

Rent Control Update

From the Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting on 12/20, we learned that tenants and pro rent control forces were working on a lawsuit that would void ballot issues from November's election including Question B, which abolishes rent control. Their argument was that summaries of the ballot questions were not on the ballot, and therefore the election was unconstitutional. This attempt was defeated when the State Judicial Court ruled that the use of a separate sheet with summaries did not violate the constitutional requirement that summaries appear on the ballot.

Continued Page 6 . . .
Agassiz School Construction

For updates or to report problems, call the HOT LINE 497-4388

Below are floor plans for the New Agassiz School. See page 6 for construction information.
The ruling puts all the ballot questions approved in November into effect. However, one Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court extended a temporary injunction that stayed the abolishment of rent control until January 3.

The next step in court will be transferred to Suffolk Superior Court where it will be heard. Justice Herbert Wilkins said: "In my view the plaintiffs have a difficult but not impossible task of demonstrating that departures from prescribed procedures were reasonably likely to have affected the result on Question 9." (From The Boston Globe, 12/30.)

As of 12/30, a bill has been passed by both the Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate which would extend rent control for two years to protect the disabled, elderly and low income (which is defined as 60% of the median income for the greater Boston area). The Boston Globe reported 12/30 that Governor Weld would veto the legislation unless Denise Jillson of the Massachusetts Homeowners Coalition, and anti rent control activist in Cambridge was satisfied with it, which she is not.

There are last minute negotiations as the Whistler goes to press, and the fate of rent control is still unsure.

Jo Anne Preston would like to remind all tenants that any notice of rent increases is illegal until January 3. The ANC would like to remind tenants that there are materials available in our offices on the Housing Code. How a tenant can deal with eviction procedures, where to get assistance and a sample letter to send to your landlord. Call the office at 349-6287.

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**Agassiz School Construction**

**Update:**
Steel erection should be completed by the time you receive this newsletter. The building will be sheathed, and masons will begin the exterior of the building under the sheathing. Oxford Street will be used for the staging of the masonry. This phase will be ongoing until early spring. See ANC Meeting Notes p 1 and Oxford St. Closing p 2 for more information.

**Log:**
- **12/1** Caller was annoyed that Novel Iron Works trucks were using Sacramento, not Oxford St. as agreed. Advised the contractor, who said he has instructed all drivers to use Oxford.
- **12/5** Caller wanted to know if Oxford Street was really closing until March. Was advised yes.
- **12/12** Contractor called to say that 12/13 would be a day of concrete finishing which meant that the work would continue until the concrete was set. There would be no trucks, but a motor sounding like a lawn mower would be going on and off.
- **12/14** Caller was concerned about Oxford being closed off through March because it was a major inconvenience to drivers. She was advised of the meeting on 12/20 where there would be a chance for discussion.
- **12/29** Caller concerned about the condition of the Community Garden. Said the cut was wider than promised, workers used it as a pass way, plants were lost, soil replaced was of poor quality. Wanted good quality soil immediately. Referred the complaint to City Manager's Office.

**Note:** Many calls to the hot line were related to the proposed extension of the Oxford Street closing. For a report of these calls, see Oxford Street Stays Closed page 2.

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**Community School**

**New Afterschool Term**
Parents with children who attend (or would like to attend) after school one, two or three days per week must register for Afterschool Activities Term Two which will begin January 30. If you are already registered, material will be sent to you.

Children must be in grades K-5 to attend. (There are courses for students grades 6-8.) If the child is in a Cambridge Public School, s/he can be bussed to Agassiz Afterschool. Parents may select any days of the week, and different activities will be available depending on the day chosen. Activities include dance, drama, sports, art, cooking, creative writing, and much more.

If you would like to receive a brochure, get further information, or sign your child up for part time Afterschool, call Jody Garber at 349-6287.

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**Wish List for Afterschool Programs**
1. An IBM Compatible Keyboard
2. Video tapes your children have outgrown

If you have these items to donate, please call Jody Garber at 349-6287.

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**Agassiz Kids Sale Raffle Winners**
- $100 Savings Bond won by Agassiz 4/5 Teacher Joanne Berger
- Hollywood Express Coupon Book won by Quense-Hughes family
- Averof Restaurant Free Dinner won by Noel Blanchard
Cultural Happenings

A Joyful Noise January 14

Share in the gifts of gospel as the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center presents "A Joyful Noise," their 8th annual gospel concert tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Saturday January 14 at 7 p.m. in Sanders Theater, Harvard University.

The show is produced and emceed by Dr. Donnell Patterson and Patricia Dance. Dr. Patterson, who once taught at the Agassiz School, believes "gospel has a common joyfulness, something with rhythm and harmony that's energetic, positive and uplifting for everyone." The irrepressible Dr. Patterson has a reputation for inspiring even the most reserved audiences to get out of their chairs and shout "hallelujah!"

The program includes work songs by Unified Voices of Christ; spirituals by contralto Ruth Hamilton, soprano Beverly Mosby and baritone Emery Stephens, Jr.; a fusion of gospel and blues by Larry Watson and saxophonist Alphonso Thomas; traditional gospel by both St. Paul AME's New Temple Singers and Angels Without Wings, the church's charismatic children's choir; a fusion of gospel and jazz by Gordon Michaels and the GNE Repertory Ensemble; and contemporary gospel with Francis Ingram.

Tickets are assigned seats and cost $10, $5 for seniors and children under 12. Order by calling Sanders Theater at 495-2222.

PEAL - Poetry Events at Lesley

Elizabeth McKim of Lesley College has created a monthly poetry series to bring to Lesley an array of distinguished Boston area poets. These events are free and open to the public. Each presentation will be followed by a reception and book signing. For more information call Peggy Barrasso at 349-5457.

January 29 "Poets Who Teach" 12-5 p.m. Alumni Hall

Poet/educators who launched the original Poets in the Schools program is Massachusetts Ruth Whitman, Harriet Feinberg, Kinereth Gensler, Harold Bond, Nina Nyhart, Judith Steinbergh, Elizabeth McKim, Diana Der Hovanessian, Helene Davis, Suzanne Berger, Ruth Lespol and Miriam Goodman will give readings and workshops on writing. They will also talk about the connections between teaching and writing poetry and how these two aspects of their creative lives impact on each other.

February 1, Patricia Smith 7:30 p.m. Alumni Hall

Patricia Smith, a dynamic African American artist, is an internationally known performance poet, acclaimed author and reporter for the Boston Globe. Her books include Close to Death, Big Town Big Talk, and Life According to Motown. Her poems have been adapted for the theater by Nobel Poet Derek Walcott.

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Call to Performing Artists

Boston Center for the Arts seeks a mix of established and emerging artists for the third season of a residency program in the performing arts. Artists and companies selected for residences receive low-cost performance space, free rehearsal space and assistance with marketing and promotion. The BCA works with participants to develop outreach activities such as reduced ticket prices, open rehearsals, post-performance discussions and more.

To receive guidelines and an application form, come to the BCA office Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. or send a self addressed, stamped envelope to BCA Residency Co., 539 Tremont St. Boston, MA 02116. Applications are due 1/27. Two informational workshops are scheduled for 1/14 and 1/17. Please RSVP if you plan to attend.

BCA can be reached at 426-5000 for more information.

Announcements

Youth Build Has Jobs Now

Just A Start's newly established program, Youth Build, has immediate job opportunities for participants ages 16-24 years of age. This program combines education, work and training all in one, and you're paid as you train. Hours are 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Opportunities include G.E.D. preparation, language classes, vocational education, career development, entrepreneurial workshops, housing renovation/construction work and more. For more information call Sonja Tucker at 494-0444.

Avon Expands

Century 21 Avon has recently expanded and is currently renovating the new space at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Sacramento St. Linda Cohen, Office Manager has advised the ANC that as soon as the work is finished, they will throw a huge party and invite everyone in Cambridge.

The new space was formerly leased by Lesley College, Lesley has moved their offices to their newly purchased building. Porter Exchange.
January 1995

Community Calendar

Monday, January 2
7:30 p.m.
A Joyful Noise Gospel Show
Sanderson Theater, Call 496-2222

Tuesday, January 17
6:30 p.m.
ANC Board Meeting
Agassiz Community Room
1651 Mass Ave. (at Wendell St.)
New Afterschool Term begins

Wednesday, January 11
7:30 p.m.
Martin Luther King Holiday

Saturday, January 14

Monday, January 16
6:30 p.m.
ANC Council Meeting
Agassiz Community Room
1651 Mass Ave. (at Wendell St.)

Monday, January 30

Reach us VIA E-mail at CompuServe. Our address is: 74372.1770 @ CompuServe.com.

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