Council Meeting Notes from 4/9

Prentiss St. Plans for Bed and Breakfast

In March a variance was granted by the BZA (Board of Zoning Appeals) to convert 6 Prentiss St. from a nursing home to an 18 room bed and breakfast. When the neighborhood learned about this, a letter was sent to the BZA by the neighborhood council requesting an appeal. The BZA informed the council that they intended to consider reopening the case at their April 25th meeting due to lack of notification and confusion over use.

A group of 23 residents heard a presentation by Charlotte Forsythe and husband Jerry Fandetti at the Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting of April 9th. They described their plans to convert the former nursing home into a bed and breakfast with 18 rooms. The plan will restore the historically significant section of the site and replace the brick section with new construction that matches the original site architecturally. All 18 rooms will have private baths and "wet bars" that appear to be minimal kitchen facilities. Seven parking spaces will be provided for staff and guests.

While the use of the site as a bed and breakfast was favorably viewed at the meeting, there were several questions posed by residents. Concerns related to the size of the proposed bed and breakfast including lack of adequate parking for staff and guests, and increased traffic flowing from Oxford onto Prentiss St. at odd hours was expressed. It was felt that management staff for the site was underestimated.

The Zoning Code does not have specific regulations for bed and breakfast use. This made it extremely difficult for the neighborhood to clarify actual use. The applicants have applied under the lodging house designation.

A letter was sent to the BZA outlining the above mentioned concerns, and suggested that a plan for off site parking be submitted before a variance be granted for an establishment with so many rooms. The letter also requested that the zoning board, when planning regulations for small inns, bed and breakfasts, etc., consider requirements that took number of rooms, bathrooms, kitchen, and common space into consideration.

[At an April 25th meeting the BZA requested that representatives from the neighborhood meet with the applicants to work the problems out. The BZA has decided to accept additional testimony for 6 Prentiss St. on May 9th. Contact the BZA at 349-6100 for details.]

Due to the length of time taken for this presentation, the discussion of the traffic study received from the city for Oxford St. was postponed. Anyone interested in that issue should contact the council office at 349-6287.

Neighborhood News

Nominating Committee

This year the board of directors has acted on the longstanding idea of expanding the Agassiz Neighborhood Council board to include people from various neighborhood interest areas that have not traditionally been represented. The Agassiz Neighborhood Council wrote a letter calling for volunteers and included it in the April Whistler. It was also sent to businesses and institutions in the neighborhood. The response to this outreach has been excellent, and we are happy to announce the candidacy of five new board members, Kathleen Manion, Chris Guerrero, Andrea Averill, Zarayuzati Snell-Doyle, and Rich Curran. Kathleen Manion, who lives on Newport Rd., has recently retired after a career of fund raising, most recently at Harvard. Chris Guerrero, who has been an active community organizer, lives on Mellen St. and has expressed interest in safety and accessibility of services and programs. Andrea Averill is Asst. Treasurer for the Cambridge Trust Co. branch at 1720 Mass. Ave., and Zarayuzati Snell-Doyle is a resident of Newport Rd. and owner of The Chocolate Box located at 1768 Mass. Ave. Rich Curran, whose son will begin Outback Summer Camp this summer, is a graphic artist and runs Basement Graphics, a desktop publishing company. He lives on Wendell St.

A complete slate will be published in the June Whistler. Please call the council at 349-6287 for further information.

Cars Towed from Porter Exchange Lot

We have had a complaint from a neighborhood resident whose car was towed from the parking lot behind
The Whistler May 1991
Porter Exchange (formerly Sears) while she shopped at Irwins. The neighborhood council would like to know if this has happened to anyone else, so please call 349-6287 if you have had a problem of this kind.

Agassiz School Auction MAY 18
The Agassiz School will hold its Second Annual Auction on Saturday May 18th in Baldwin Hall. There will be a silent auction at 7 P.M. and the live auction will begin at 7:30 P.M. There will be many exciting services and prizes auctioned off. A catalogue will be issued describing the prizes closer to the event. For more information call the school at 349-6525.

There will be an optional donation of $4 at the door, and admission includes wonderful desserts. The refreshments are worth admission, and David Clem's skill as an auctioneer will entertain you even if you just come to watch!

Note: Dog Leash and Waste Laws
We print excerpts from the Cambridge regulations here to be sure neighbors understand what is required of dog owners in our City. There is an Animal Commission if you are having problems with dog owners. They urge you to call them at 349-6376. You may have to leave a message, but it will be returned in a timely fashion. If the problem cannot wait, call the police at 349-3300.

6.04.030 Dogs-Leash or restraint Required-Offense
A. No person owning or keeping a dog shall permit it to be at large other than on his own premises; if it be on the premises of another person, it shall be with the knowledge and permission of such other person. The owner, keeper or person having custody of a dog which is not on the premises of the owner or upon the premises of another person with the knowledge and permission of such person shall keep the dog under control by means of a chain, rope or cord not exceeding six feet in length of sufficient strength to control the actions of such dog.

6.04.040 Dogs-Leash or restraint-Areas exempted where.
A. Dogs may be unleashed on Fresh Pond Reservation, provided they have been trained by their masters to follow oral commands; and provided further, that they are not allowed to romp in mowed, grassy areas; and provided further, that their owners are City residents who have received resident sticker parking permits approved by the Water Board and issued by the Traffic Department.

6.04.050 Dogs-noises unlawful
No person shall own or keep in the City any dog which by barking, biting, howling or in any other manner, disturbs the quiet of any person.

6.04.060 Dogs-Removal of waste required
It shall be the duty of each person who owns, possesses or controls a dog to remove and dispose of any feces left by his dog on any sidewalk, gutter, street or other public area, or on any private property neither owned nor occupied by such person without the means of removal of any feces left by such dog.

Anyone who would like a complete copy of the Animal Control Regulations for Cambridge should call the council office at 349-6287.

Quality Inn Conversion to Harvard Dorm Update
Since the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) meeting on March 21st to hear Harvard's request for a special permit to convert the Quality Inn to a Harvard Law School Dormitory this fall, the interested neighbors have been very busy. The final community meeting, held on 4/30, worked out the details of an agreement between the neighborhood representatives and Harvard.

On 3/21 the BZA asked the neighborhood and Harvard to go back to work and come up with a proposal that would address issues which had not been solved to the satisfaction of many neighbors. Three major issues that emerged were the loss of taxes, loss of the swimming pool and traffic concerns. The original Agassiz representatives, which included Ken Basler, David Chilinski, Terry DeLancey, and Jody Garber was expanded to include Ellen Friedman, who spoke for the traffic impact at Mellen St. and Mass. Ave., and Randy Byers, who represented users of the Quality Inn pool.

Separate meetings on traffic were planned. Harvard University ordered a traffic study, and Lauren Preston, from the City of Cambridge Traffic Department, was included in the planning meeting. A plan for traffic and parking has been worked out the the satisfaction of committee members.

The loss of the pool was discussed at length. In the final analysis what could not be replaced by resources in Cambridge or at Harvard was a safe, informal and accessible outdoor swimming experience for 10-14 year olds in the summer months. Harvard has agreed to subsidize an annual swim program for this age group, managed by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council when the pool is closed down.

Harvard will continue to pay taxes as long as the city bills them. When the property is taken off the tax rolls, Harvard will follow the in lieu of tax pilot agreement that was established last year. Harvard feels that the pilot agreement must hold for all properties in Cambridge. All agreements are made by the City Treasurer and Manager.

There will be a full report in the June Whistler to cover the May 9th BZA meeting when the BZA will determine if Harvard is to receive the special permit.

Lesley College Tennis Court
Did you know that the Lesley College Tennis Courts located on Wendell St. can be used by residents of the Agassiz neighborhood? You must reserve the courts in advance in person at the Lesley Security Office, and when requesting space you must bring ID that proves you are an Agassiz resident. To reach the security office from Oxford St., turn onto Mellen and take the first set of stairs to the left. The Security Office is the first door on the left. You can reach them by phone at 349-8889 to determine availability of courts for the day, but you must sign up in person.

Court time is reserved for one hour periods from 8A.M.-6P.M. April through November. On the court you must be able to produce ID.

You can call the council office at 349-6287 for a complete list of Tennis Court Regulations.
Parenting Course Offered
Ginny Hutchison, Resource Room Teacher at the Agassiz School, has found funds to run a free Parenting Workshop which will be taught by members of the Cambridge Guidance Center. Space for this course will be provided at the Agassiz Community Center by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council. This 7 week course begins on April 30th, and is offered free to parents of 4th - 8th graders in the Agassiz community. It will focus on adolescent issues.

City Wide News and Information
Town Gown Committee
Mayor Alice Wolf has appointed a task force to examine university/city relationships including in lieu of tax payments and university expansion. This will not only include Harvard, but it will include other Educational institutions such as M.I.T. and Lesley College. Other opportunities for shared resources will be explored. The chair of this committee will be Agassiz resident Jim Stockard.

Old House Clinic Offered on May 18th
The Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission will hold a House Clinic for homeowners, "Your Old House Love It or Lose It!", on May 18th at the Longfellow School, 359 Broadway. Members of the Conservation District Commission and other specialists will be available to answer homeowners' questions on a variety of subjects related to preserving historic houses, from choosing colors for exterior house painting to planning new additions on older houses. The Clinic will be held in conjunction with the Longfellow School Spring Fair.

Homeowners should bring a photograph of their house, or some other illustration, such as architectural drawings or a site plan, to indicate the nature of their question. Among the topics on which owners can receive advice will be: construction techniques for older houses, lead paint abatement, landscape design and the historic house, establishing a maintenance program, and energy conservation. The City Arborist will discuss Cambridge's street tree planting program and a representative of the Department of Public Works will review planned street improvements for the Mid Cambridge neighborhood.

The House Clinic is open to all residents of Cambridge, free of charge, and will be held from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Longfellow School which is handicapped accessible at the Fayette St. entrance. For more information, contact the Cambridge Historical Commission, 349-4683.

Volunteers Wanted at Conservation Commission
The Conservation Commission has a few openings for voting members and unlimited openings for non-voting members. The commission was established to protect and preserve Cambridge wetlands, streams, rivers and floodplains. The commission regulates development within 100 feet of protected areas, and current projects under review by the commission include the Central Artery Charles River Crossing and proposed improvements at the Alewife/Rte 2 area. Applicants for voting positions should have experience in or knowledge of state and city regulations and/or hydrology and civil engineering.

Applicants may call Director Elizabeth Epstein at 349-4680 or send a resume and letter to her at 57 Inman St. Cambridge 02139.

Create a Recycling Logo
The Cambridge Curbside Recycling program scheduled to being on July 15th is looking for a logo, slogan and/or mascot. Participants may submit an idea for any or all of the categories, and a winner will be selected by a special city committee. The winner idea will promote curbside recycling all over Cambridge, and the winner will receive a $500 U.S. Savings Bond. Call Scott Ruescher at 495-3441 or Kristine Lessard at 623-6973.

Cambridge Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance
The City of Cambridge released a draft ordinance on 3/29, copies of which are available in City Hall, regarding the proposed SIP (State Implementation Plan) Amendment and Cambridge Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance. Hearings on the ordinance will be held in May. For more information contact the City Manager's Office, 349-4300.

WALK-A-THON for the Blind Chaired by Charles Flaherty
There will be a WALK-A-THON on Sunday June 2 from 10 A.M. until 4 P.M. at Fresh Pond in Cambridge to benefit the National Federation of the Blind.

The WALK-A-THON route follows the jogging trail around Fresh Pond. One lap is 2.5 miles- walk one to six laps for a maximum of 15 miles. Refreshments will be available throughout the day, and registered participants will receive official T-shirts.

To receive a brochure or for more information call 661-1900.

REGISTER NOW FOR FALL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS
The Sacramento St. Preschool (ages 2 yrs nine months to 5 yrs) and the Agassiz Afterschool Childcare Program (grades K-4) are currently enrolling for the fall of 1991. If you are interested in these programs, call Dawn Greene at 349-6287 for more information or to register.

The Outback Summer Camp located behind 20 Sacramento St. is filling up fast. The camp serves children entering first through sixth grade for eight weeks in the summer. The camp runs from 8:30AM - 2:30 P.M. with an extended day option until 5:30 P.M. We urge you to register early, especially if you are interested in extended day. For more information or a brochure call the office at 349-6287.

BEACON ST. LAUNDROMAT
358 Beacon Street
Somerville/Cambridge Line
864-8654
**Community Calendar for MAY**

**May 8 Wednesday** 12:45 P.M.  
School release day

**May 9 Thursday** 7 P.M.  
Board of Zoning Appeals, City Hall  
Continuation of two hearings:  
Special Permit to convert the Quality Inn to a  
Harvard Dormitory; and Variance to convert  
6 Prentiss St. from a nursing home to a  
bed and breakfast

**May 14 Tuesday** 7:30 P.M.  
Neighborhood Council Meeting  
20 Sacramento St. Upstairs meeting room  
See agenda page one

**May 18 Saturday** 7 P.M.  
Agassiz Auction, Agassiz School  
28 Sacramento St. Call 349-6525 for Information

**May 18 Saturday** 10 A.M.-2 P.M.  
Old House Clinic, Longfellow School,  
359 Broadway in Multi-Purpose Room

**May 27 Monday**  
Memorial Day Holiday

**June 2 Sunday** 10 A.M.-4 P.M.  
WALK A THON to benefit National  
Federation of the Blind. Call 661-1900x688

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**The Whistler**

**May 1991**

Agassiz Neighborhood Council  
20 Sacramento St.  
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