Council Meeting Notes

*Please note the October meeting was audio taped, and we hope to tape all future meetings. If you would like to hear that or future tapes, contact the council office at 349-6287.*

There were approximately 33 residents at the October meeting to meet Police Commissioner Perry Anderson. Prior to his arrival, there was a report from Susan Sills, one of the neighborhood representatives to the Agassiz School Renovations/ rebuilding Committee. This report served to update the council on Agassiz School renovations/rebuilding. (See neighborhood news for the most current report.)

Commissioner Perry Anderson was accompanied by State Representative Alvin Thompson. He discussed recent changes in the Cambridge Police Department since he has become Commissioner, a new position in Cambridge that Anderson filled in early summer. He told the council that his activities have primarily been directed toward increased visibility, appropriate distribution of personnel (with some walking in community), and a possible increase in staff of 18, primarily to walk beats and render increased personal services. He also discussed the lack of technology employed by the Cambridge Police and the immediate need to access newest technology, as well as the need for an improved facility which provides a positive work environment. The Commissioner feels that the City has excellent personnel but lags behind in techniques and philosophy.

A Citizens’ Advisory Board has been established, and has met twice. Its purpose is advisory and to provide direction. Members of this board will be privy to most police operations, and they will have access throughout the facility. The philosophy is that the police department is a public agency for public needs, and it must allow public input and public direction.

In addition to the above mentioned issues there are many other management issues that must be addressed, such as evaluations of personnel, how assignments are made, updating of the police procedures manual and written policies and procedures. Commissioner Perry felt that there must be a financial commitment from the City of Cambridge to meet these ends.

[There were many specific questions asked by residents, and many of these issues will be dealt with in the council’s newly begun Safety Committee. The first issue that will be taken up in that committee will be the establishment of Crimewatch Blocks throughout the neighborhood. See “Neighborhood News” for how you can get involved.]

Jim O’Neill gave the council an update on 6 Prentiss St., the former nursing home that will soon be a bed and breakfast. There was a license hearing on October 8th, and the License Commission assured those present that the license will read bed and breakfast. [Construction has begun at that site, and anyone who may have a question about the agreement made between the developers and the neighbors for the construction phase should call the council at 349-6287.]

There was a discussion on the open lot behind 21 Frost St. which is visible from Newport Road, and was understood by neighbors to provide 5 parking spaces as part of a parking agreement previously made by developers and residents. Since that time, some spaces have been landscaped and lost. While the landscaping is more aesthetically

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**NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

**Wednesday November 20**

7:30 P.M. 20 Sacramento St.

**Agenda**

Pat Byrne from Lesley College will give us a description of programs in the Porter Exchange Building and a general update on Lesley College news of interest to the neighborhood.

Election of Officers

Scheduling date for monthly council meeting.
pleasing, it adds more cars to street parking. Since there seemed to be a communication issue, it was agreed to look into the original documents and get back to David Mason, who represented 21 Frost Street at the meeting.

**Officers of ANC**
A slate of Officers for the Agassiz Neighborhood Council Inc. has been set, and elections will be held at the November meeting: Chairman: Ken Basler from Sacramento St., Vice Chairman: Cynthia Snell from Newport Rd., Treasurer: Andrea Averill from Cambridge Trust, and Secretary: James O'Neill from Forest St.

**20th Annual Thanksgiving Pot Luck Feast**
Come and help us celebrate our twentieth Thanksgiving Pot Luck Dinner on Tuesday November 26 from 5:30 until 7:30 P.M. This dinner is one of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council’s oldest traditions, and all members of the Agassiz Community are welcome. As usual, we will hold the pot luck dinner in Baldwin Hall at the Agassiz School.

You can bring a side dish (we love salads, casseroles and vegetable dishes) for your family plus four, or volunteer to cook a fresh turkey which we will provide and deliver to your home on Monday November 25th. You can deliver the cooked turkey to the school anytime after 5 P.M. Call the council at 349-6287 if you’d like to cook a turkey.

We will show videos for the children in the school library. For the safety and enjoyment of all, children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Agassiz School Principal**
The various committees have finished their work, and all group interviews have been completed in the hiring process for the new Agassiz School principal. Mary Lou McGrath, Superintendent of Schools is expected to make her recommendation for Agassiz School Principal to the School Committee in mid November.

**Agassiz School Building Update**
The Agassiz Renovations Task Force, comprised of the 21st Century Committee and four representative of the Agassiz Community, meet on 9/26. Discussion ranged from specific issues of concern to the neighborhood, as generated at the meeting of 9/19, to directions the building renovation/addition might take. Specifically:

- The **TIMETABLE**, as previously conceived, cannot be met, given the concerns of the community, the involvement of the historical commission, and the various alternatives being considered.
- The **SITE ALTERNATIVES** discussed included:
  1. Renovate the existing building and build an addition on the existing site.
  2. Expand the existing site to include adjacent property.
  3. Move to a new site within the neighborhood.
  4. Build an annex building nearby and renovate the existing site.
  5. Move the school to a site out of the neighborhood.
- The issue of **keeping Agassiz a K-8th grade vs. changing to a K-5th grade school** was again raised and will be readdressed as the various site alternatives are explored. It was suggested that a presentation be made to the task force regarding the K-6 model as is implemented at the Haggerty School.
- It was suggested that the **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM** might include some collaboration with Lesley College or Harvard University.
- The **POSITIVE OUTCOME** now that the process has been slowed, is that everyone will have the opportunity to carefully consider these alternatives.

A follow-up meeting of the Agassiz Renovations Task Force with Mayor Alice Wolf, City Manager Robert Healy and Community Development Commissioner Michael Rosenberg took place at City Hall on October 8th.

It was agreed that someone from the **SCHOOL DEPARTMENT** and from **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** would be assigned to assist the
The Whistler November 1991

**Quality Inn becomes North Hall**

In a letter dated 10/4 to the Board of Zoning Appeals, Sandra Coleman, Administrative Dean at Harvard Law states "Construction of the community room and the handicapped accessible rest rooms is completed. We are now working on the elevator access and outside entrance to the room. The elevator is on order with installation scheduled in December.

Permission to demolish the pool was secured from the lease holder, Mr. DeMatteo on September 17, 1991. Work will begin with the next few weeks to remove the pool and install new sidewalks for access to the community room. We fully expect the room to be available to the community in January, the date originally discussed with the Agassiz Neighborhood group.

The exterior of the building will be painted in October. Several color samples are now up for review and comment.

We have been informed by Tanya Cvek, Assistant Director for physical planning, Harvard Planning Group, that Chief Fitzgerald of the Cambridge Fire Department wants to maintain all curb cuts. Chief Fitzgerald will be submitting a letter to Ranjit Singanayagam, at the Cambridge Inspectional Services Department, which will state that all existing curb cuts at the Quality Inn must be maintained for emergency access only. The Law School will install readily removable barriers at the two existing curb cuts on Mass. Ave. and Mellen Street that will meet the fire department's approval.

Final planning is underway for all additional landscaping. The installation schedule is dictated by the weather and planting requirements. However, we expect it to be fully completed in the spring of 1992, well within the eighteen months noted in Kathy Spiegelman's May 3, 1991 letter to the Board."

Since then representatives from the neighborhood and Harvard have met to discuss the progress on renovations. Agassiz representatives were taken on a tour of the new community room, which is indeed finished as planned. As noted in the letter, access to the room will not be available until sometime in January due to the installation of the elevator and demolition of the pool. Because the community will access the room via the door directly in front of the pool, a suitable entry way and walkways must also be constructed.

The contractors are scheduled to begin the painting immediately, weather permitting. Landscaping will begin in the spring which will improve the Wendell St. side of the building, now a parking lot, and the front of the building. Harvard will wait until that time to remove the old Quality Inn sign.

The neighborhood representatives were surprised to find that Dollar Car Rental (and their yellow sign on the side of the building) will be located at North Hall possibly until September 1992 due to their lease. Harvard has been looking for alternate sites, but Dollar Car Rental has not accepted any proposals yet.

If you have any questions about North Hall or the agreement made between the community and Harvard, please call the council office or come to the next council meeting (11/20) when questions can be addressed in person.

**Retirement Party for Kay Cox**

There will be a dinner on Friday November 15th for Kay Cox, who retired as Agassiz Principal last June. The dinner in her honor will be held at the Oakley Country Club in Belmont for friends and colleagues. For tickets or information please call the Agassiz School at 349-6525.
Groups Meet in Community Center

When the Agassiz School lost their adjustment counselors, the Agassiz School Counseling Program came up with an excellent idea. They would establish small groups of Junior High School Students for discussion and support during lunch period.

The problem was space - where could the school hold the groups? So Acting Principal Kate Conway contacted the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, and space was found in the Community Center. Now there are groups meeting each Tuesday through Thursday for lunch and discussion.

Call for Wendell St. Questionnaire

For the past few weeks, Astrid Dodds, Wendell St. resident and member of the Agassiz Traffic Committee, has been taking pictures at the corners of Wendell and Oxford and Wendell and Mass. Ave. to provide some current information on the traffic situation at those sites. She has devised the questionnaire below: A Wendell/Oxford Traffic Light? What do you think? The Agassiz Traffic Committee is conducting an informal survey of user opinion - that means pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. Anyone who reads this and has an opinion is invited to call 354-6553. Feel free to call anytime and leave a message on the machine. Be sure to leave:

- Your name
- What street you live on
- Your mode of transportation at that intersection
- Whether a traffic light there would make your life easier or harder.

So that we're all operating on the same assumptions, let's assume for purposes of this poll that we are talking about a 3 way light that would remain green on Oxford unless a red light is triggered automatically by a car pulling up to the intersection on the east block of Wendell or by a pedestrian asking for a walk cycle either to cross Oxford on a new crosswalk or the west block of Wendell at the crosswalk presently there.

We want to hear from you!

Neighbors Interested in Crimewatch

There has been some recently renewed interest in a Crimewatch program for the neighborhood. At the October council meeting, the new Police Commissioner was asked about the Crimewatch program, and he agreed to get us some information. We have received information from the police department, and can provide you with it if you are interested in organizing your block or street, or if you just want to participate in a watch.

Once we hear from interested neighbors, we can organize a meeting, and a police representative will come out to answer questions. Please call the council at 349-6287 to receive information or to be on the mailing list for an organizational meeting with the police.

Council to Discuss Regular Meeting Time

At the November meeting on Wednesday 11/20, the Agassiz Neighborhood Council will open discussion on the scheduling of regular monthly evening meetings. Should they be on a fixed schedule as they were in the past (such as the second Wednesday of each month), or should the schedule of meetings be flexible?

Please come to the meeting and let yourself be heard. If you are unable to attend and have some input, please call the council at 349-6287, or drop us a note at 20 Sacramento St. We will consider all suggestions received before the meeting.

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Bike Committee

We have received a report from the Mayor's Bicycle Committee, courtesy of Mayor Alice Wolf. There was a hearing scheduled before City Council on Monday October 28, but the Whistler went to press before it occurred.

The Executive Summary of the report states that bicycling is an effective transportation mode in Cambridge due to its terrain and density. A major barrier to bicycling is lack of safety, poor bicycle parking facilities and lack of education and promotion of bicycling in Cambridge. The recommendations of the committee are as follows:
1. Establish a bicycle route network.
2. Evaluate and improve existing bicycle parking and create new facilities.
3. Provide education to both bicyclists and motorists.
4. Promote bicycling as transportation via city government.
5. Appoint a full time Bicycle Program Manager.
6. Establish a permanent bicycle committee.

Anyone who would like to read the complete report can contact the council at 349-6287.

Support for Families Affected by AIDS

The Cambridge Youth Guidance Center is offering the following support services for children and teens who are living in families affected by AIDS or HIV: peer support groups, individual counseling, and consultation to community service providers.

For more information call Sandra Black, M. Ed., at 354-2275.

Kindergarten Informational Meetings

Do you have a child who will be four years old on or before March 31, 1992? If so your child is eligible to register to attend Cambridge Public School Kindergarten in September 1992. Meet teachers, administrators and Parents from all schools at an informational meeting Thursday November 7 at 7:30 P.M. at the Morse School on 40 Granite Street.

The first application period will begin in January 1992. For Kindergarten information, call 349-6550 or 349-6482.

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Kids Only Holiday Sale

Take the anxiety out of holiday shopping with your children. The Agassiz Neighborhood Council will again present a Holiday Gift Sale for Children which will open on Monday December 2nd through Sunday December 8th. Hours of the sale will be 10-5 on Saturday, 12-5 on Sunday and 2:45-6 on Weekdays. This sale provides inexpensive gifts for children to purchase for their friends and relatives including grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings. Adults must be accompanied by children.

Prices range from under $1 to about $7, with many gifts in the $1-$2 range. The “store” is located in the Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento St. Parents will be pleased to see that the “sales people” are really teachers and staff from the Agassiz Afterschool programs who are ready to help children with selecting their purchases and managing their finances. Children may safely shop alone.

Many items in our sale have been donated by Jolie De Vivre, located at 1792 Mass. Ave., and we thank them for their generous support again this year. All income raised from this sale will go to our scholarship fund.

For more information please call the council at 349-6287.

Lesley College News

George Hein Honored

Agassiz resident George Hein was honored on October 29th with a special presentation made by Lesley College President Margaret McKenna at the Anniversary Perfromathon, and event to celebrate twenty successful years of the Independent Study Degree Program.

Hein was honored for his many wonderful contributions to IDS and Lesley College as a whole, and a reception was held that Tuesday between 5-6 PM. Members of the College and neighborhood community were invited.

Pat Byrne to Address Neighborhood

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council has invited Pat Byrne, Executive Assistant to the President and Director of Public Affairs at Lesley, to the November Council Meeting, which will be held on November 20th (see page one for details).

Pat will give the neighborhood a Lesley news update, including information on programs at the Porter Exchange Building and the new dorm on Wendell St.
The Whistler November 1991

New Council Program

Gospel Choir Begins November 7

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council is sponsoring a gospel choir for grades 5-8 after school in Baldwin Hall at the Agassiz School. The choir will be directed by Deborah Brown, who is in her seventh year as a music teacher with the Cambridge School Department.

For the past seven years, Brown has directed the Cambridge Rindge and Latin Gospel Choir. She is also the director of the Youth Choir of the Shiloh Baptist Church in Medford and an instructor of piano.

The goal of this project is to let children enjoy the art of performance, build self-esteem and better understand gospel music. Although gospel music is inspired by the Christian tradition, this choir will not have a religious affiliation.

The choir is open to all children with or without previous musical experience able to attend rehearsals and performances. Rehearsals will begin on Thursday November 7th and continue through the school year each Thursday. Membership in the choir is free, but all children must be registered. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. For more information or to register call 349-6297.

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council also sponsors the Agassiz Youth Chorus, under the direction of Ada Park Snider. It meets on Fridays, and first rehearsals began on October 11th. Currently that chorus is available to children ages 7 and older, and membership is free.

Cultural Events

Agassiz Players Open 5th Season

The Agassiz Afterschool Players, directed by Carol Huntman, will open its Fifth Season on November 16th at 7:30 P.M. in Baldwin Hall, Agassiz School with four new plays. Donations gratefully accepted at the door.

Stage I (Grades 1-4) will present “Foul Play” written and performed by Claire Blumenson, Amira Soifer, Sarah Hall-Nourse, Justine Naugurney, Michael Littenberg-Brown, Carrie Kindleberger, Jessie Ornstein, Julia Sheketoff, Menna Zalou and Margaret Levy. They will also present “Lost and Found” written and performed by Natalie Akula, Maria Harris, Mako Takahashi-Parker, Leigh Schuster, Kate Silver Heilman, Joanne Levy, Nicole Suida, Susannah Colby and Mekkin Lynch.

Stage II (Grades 4-7) will present “Competition” written and performed by Gio Gaynor, Emily Griffin, Luc Schuster, Melina Avery, Kayvon Ross, Rachel Applebaum, Claire Singer, Maya Antic, Rebecca Ennen and Caleb Epps. They will also present “Who’s the Clown?” written and performed by Michael Sullivan, Daria Antic, Bushra Makiya, Aaron Novod, Ned Colby, Nate Gundy, Rafi Soifer and Sean Ragon.

Because of the unprecedented turn out this term, Director Carol Huntman has had the benefit of help from Rebecca Tortello, Sandi Lucey and Nancy McClellan. In addition, Rafi Soifer has been acting as assistant to the Director for the Stage I plays.

Playwrights Platform at Agassiz

On the first three Sundays of each month the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, 20 Sacramento St. will host the Playwrights Platform which will present semi-staged readings of new plays and works-in-progress by playwrights from the New England area.

After each reading, refreshments are served and the audience is cordially invited to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the play in a forum which is moderated to assure that the discussion is constructive and that air-time is evenly apportioned. Most readings and subsequent discussions are over by 10 P.M.

Anyone with questions about the readings or Playwrights Platform should call Carol Huntman at 354-5118. The Platform looks forward to performing in the Agassiz community and hopes that anyone interested in live theater will attend. All readings are free and open to the public.

Readings for November and December include:

November 3  "No Secrets, No Lies" by Jeralyn Horton
November 10  "Reindeer Games" by George St. Martin
November 17  Shorty Night - pieces under 20 minutes-often comedies and pieces lasting approximately 10 minutes
December 1  "Coming Apart" A new musical by Mary Hazzard
December 8  Scene Evening - Scenes from three new plays
December 15  "Till Tomorrow" by Barry Brodsky
Violin Lessons Available
Your Agassiz Neighbor, Mimi Ezust, is now accepting violin and viola adult beginners and intermediate students. Mrs. Ezust has taught at Longy, the Buckingham School, Wheelock College and the Arlington and Cambridge Public Schools. She holds degrees from Temple University College of Music and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Please call 354-5252 for further information.

Befriending Your Body Classes
Women are frequently obsessed with their bodies and often base their worth on what their weight is or how they look. Exercise is often compulsive and not pleasurable and it is difficult to know when to be satisfied with yourself. This workshop will attempt to put this in perspective and enable the participants to create a more healthful and realistic relationship with their bodies. We will use visualizations, discussions, and movement to understand the origins of these ideas and then set about undoing the myths of what women should look like and be like in our society.
This workshop is for any woman who's self esteem fluctuates based upon body image. We will use guided imagery, creative movement and discussion, working on making peace with who we are and feeling good about that. This class will be interesting and fun, as well as insightful and growthful. **November 9 Cambridge Center for Adult Education, 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. Call 547-6789. Instructor Marcie Mitler, M.Ed.**

Reclaiming Your Body Classes
Healing work for women with histories of childhood sexual abuse. This is a therapeutic movement and exercise class in a safe and protected environment for survivors to develop a more healthful relationship with their bodies. We will use music that is empowering and we will create movement that corresponds. This workshop will give the participants an opportunity to be in their bodies and to feel a sense of personal power and self-mastery.
This class will be formed around the needs of the participants. The first meeting will involve discussion and goal setting. Using breath, visualizations, relaxation, discussions and movement, this class will help participants to heighten their sense of self and embrace life more fully. **Cambridge YWCA Tuesday 6:30-8 P.M.**

Wednesday's 9:30-11 A.M. Call 491-6959. Instructor Marcie Mitler, M.Ed.

The Whistler Needs Deliverers
If you are willing to hand deliver to your street or area, please call. It only takes a few minutes, and it saves us postage. It also helps include all neighborhood newcomers who may not appear on our mailing lists. Call 349-6287.

Guidance Center Seeks Volunteer
A volunteer is needed to perform general maintenance one hour per week. Call Wendy Holt at 354-2275.

Group for Young Adults in Neighborhood
What: Group therapy with a special emphasis on social issues-solving problems, learning new skills, developing networks.
Who: Designed especially for young adults who have graduated from schools for students with special needs. Groups will be led by William Mitchell, Ed.D. Dr. Mitchell is a licensed psychologist who has had over 15 years of experience working with people who are challenged by differences in learning and development. Dr. Mitchell is an Instructor in Psychology, Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; Psychologist at the Learning Disabilities Program at Children's Hospital; Psychological Consultant and Talk Session Leader at Threshold. He has also consulted to many other schools in the Boston area, including Learning Prep School. He has a private practice in Cambridge and in Pepperell, where he works with individuals, families and groups.
When: Wednesday 6-7 P.M.
Where: 20 Sacramento St. Second Floor
How: Contact Dr. Mitchell at 547-7611 for further information.

For a warm, woolly, wonderful Christmas

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 10th</td>
<td>North Prospect Congregational Church</td>
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<td>November 11th</td>
<td>Veterans Day - Public School Holiday</td>
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<td>November 16th</td>
<td>Agassiz Afterschool Players Performance</td>
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<td>November 16th</td>
<td>Baldwin Hall Agassiz School</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 20th</td>
<td>Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting</td>
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<td>November 20th</td>
<td>Agassiz Community Center 20 Sacramento St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 26th</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Pot Luck Feast (see page 2)</td>
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<td>November 26th</td>
<td>Baldwin Hall Agassiz School</td>
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<td>November 28th</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Day - Public School Holiday</td>
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<td>November 29th</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Recess - Public School Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2nd</td>
<td>Hanukkah and Opening of Kids Only Sale (see page 5)</td>
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Playwrights Platform see Box Page 6

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**November 1991**

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

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