The Whistler
Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

Council Meeting Notes

The September 16th ANC meeting was held in the Agassiz School to review a new proposal for the site of the new Agassiz School. This proposal was developed over the summer by a group of neighborhood residents who organized after the June ANC vote that showed no consensus within the neighborhood on school sites proposed to that date. The group feared that the neighborhood would lose access to the process of site selection if someone did not act.

The proposal addresses all neighborhood concerns, and still allows for an expanded K-8 school that can meet all educational needs expressed by the 21st Century Committee. This proposal, printed as a flyer, was distributed in the September Whistler and at the council meeting. At the bottom of the flyer was a ballot for residents to vote yes or no on the proposal.

HMPH architects worked with the neighborhood group in the summer, and George Metzger presented the proposal at the meeting, answering questions from the group of approximately 100 residents. He provided drawings and a scale model of the neighborhood to depict the proposal. Residents who had opposed the earlier proposals including Ken Waxler, who led a petition campaign opposing the size of the new school, spoke in support of the proposal. They urged neighbors to support it, emphasizing that it was a good proposal despite the compromises made on all sides.

The questions, which have surfaced at every community meeting, again arose: why does Agassiz have to be a K-8 school? While the decisions to keep Agassiz a K-8 school and to expand the student population frustrate some residents, those issues have been long debated. Those issues are the core of the school and city need, and not ones they would compromise. The neighborhood would not compromise on issues of rent control and open space removal, additional institutional use of Sacramento St., building height and historical issues.

Concern was raised from residents of Wendell St. who felt they had not been included in the summer process. Members of the group who drafted the proposal agreed that it was not an all inclusive process, but the group did discuss all concerns expressed to that date and managed to develop a proposal that addressed them all.

Charles Sullivan of the Historical Commission stated that he had a report on the Agassiz School, and that there would be a hearing in November on the historical status of the building.

The next step for the neighborhood, outlined in the proposal, is an oversight committee, that “will resolve the details of the plan” and “will report on a regular basis to the neighborhood council and the community at large.”

Note NEW location for Council Meeting

Next Meeting of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council
Thursday October 22, 1992
7:30 p.m.
Community Room North Hall
1651 Mass. Ave.
(Former Quality Inn)

AGENDA:
General Business
Update on Somerville Cambridge Traffic Meeting
Update on Agassiz School Oversight Committee

"A Proposal for the New Agassiz School" neighborhood voting results:
YES - 155
NO - 13
INVALID BALLOTS - 2
Total Votes Cast - 170
The Whistler October 1992

To be part of that process, please come to the special meeting set for September 13, Tuesday at 7:30 in the Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento St., where the structure of the oversight committee will be addressed.

Ballots from the proposal were collected that night. Residents could vote yes or no on the proposal presented. The architects drawings and scale model were made available through 9/23, as was voting, at the Agassiz Community Center. The Agassiz School Community held a similar meeting on September 24, and a vote was taken. Results of that vote were not available when The Whistler went to press.

For a copy of the proposal call 349-6287.
For results of the voting, see the box on page 1
For more information, see page 5.

Neighborhood News

TRAFFIC/TRANSPORTATION

MEETINGS
(1) JOINT SOMERVILLE-CAMBRIDGE COMMITTEE
Tues., Oct. 20, 5-7 p.m.
Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento St.: The inaugural meeting of the Joint Somerville-Cambridge Traffic Committee, organized and scheduled by the Cambridge and Somerville Traffic & Parking Depts. chiefly to reconfigure the Oxford-Beacon intersection (details below).

(2) AGASSIZ TRAFFIC COMMITTEE REORGANIZATION
Thurs., Oct. 29, 7:30-9 pm
Community Room, North Hall Wendell & Mass. Ave.: ANC Traffic Committee meeting to review the issues, large and small; select a chair; and divide up the work Everyone who has contributed to the Traffic Committee’s agenda in the past year will receive invitations and be asked to indicate in what way(s) they can contribute to the committee’s work in the coming year. To be on the Traffic Comm. mailing list, call 349-6287; leave your name, address, and tel. no. Especially needed are the following:

1. A chair — who will oversee relations with Harvard and the city in the long-range goal of making Oxford “a different kind of street.” ensure that traffic committee goals are reflected on the new Agassiz School neighborhood oversight committee.

2. A liaison with the Somerville-Cambridge Joint Traffic Committee

3. A bicyclist to join the Cambridge Bicycle Advisory Committee & serve as a liaison with the ANC Traffic Committee

4. A person who will coordinate pedestrian, bicyclist, T-commuter and other non-automotive transportation quality-of-life issues.

The most important upcoming issues:
• making Oxford “a different kind of street” and doing it in coordination with the city, Harvard, Lesley, and Somerville. Taking advantage of the Agassiz School rebuilding project to make it happen sooner.

• getting the top of Oxford reconfigured by the time the bridge is finished

• emphasizing pedestrian and bicyclist quality-of-life issues

• getting the #83 bus returned to Beacon St.

• setting up a mechanism for routine review with the city of neighborhood traffic concerns and plans

• working with other Cambridge neighborhoods and organizations to lobby for a saner overall municipal transportation policy.

Some past issues: where do they stand now:
Wendell/Oxford intersection: Traffic & Parking has agreed to extend the “No Standing” zone 1 more parking space north and south of the east block of Wendell, a temporary measure until a way is found to better interrupt N-S traffic on Oxford. T&P meanwhile is doing a study to determine whether the state will approve a traffic light there.

Mass. Ave.-Wendell bus stop: has been moved from in front of the cash machine kiosk to the south corner in front of North Hall.

Crosswalks & walk lights: numerous crosswalks in the neighborhood were repainted this summer in zebra stripes, including all on Oxford. Next: getting walk lights at crosswalks parallel to main streets programmed to say “Walk” except when side street auto traffic has a green light; lobbying for more widespread use of “Defer to pedestrians in crosswalk” signs; for an effective reporting-and-response system for defective walk lights.
Sidewalk quality of life deserves its own subcommittee: The entire north side of the Wendell sidewalk from Oxford-Mass. Ave. should be replaced. The DPW pruned street trees this year, but late — in July — and in part thanks to the new light pollution-reducing street lamps, areas of unsafe darkness remain. The city arborist will trim street trees but cannot prune on private property. The city needs an effective PR campaign advising property owners of the ordinance requiring them to keep sidewalks totally clear of botanical obstruction and free of snow and ice in winter. A DPW hotline (349-4830) exists but is inadequately publicized. Crime prevention and everyday comfort and safety mesh here; we need neighborhood residents willing to survey the neighborhood, educate property owners, and stay on the DPW’s case.

Trucks on Oxford: At the June 23 bridge meeting, T&P Deputy Dir. Lauren Preston agreed to petition the state Highway Dept. for a ban on trucks on Oxford (except for deliveries). It could be a year before we know the answer. Meanwhile, the completion of the RR bridge could bring with it a startling increase in truck traffic on Oxford. Leskey delivery trucks have been creating a lot of hazardous situations lately.

Speeding on Oxford: The Police Dept. has just been asked to send to the ANC every week a copy of its weekly written report on speeding surveillance on Oxford. The May agreement was that it would be done an hour a week at random times and places.

Bicycling/Oxford St. Bicycle Route: Will Oxford become one leg in a citywide bicycle route? Will Oxford also be designated “A Bicycle Safeway” on which only law-abiding bicyclists are welcome? Will the state law banning bicycling in business districts be enforced? Will the Cambridge Bicycle Advisory Committee endorse a municipal ordinance banning bicycling on sidewalks everywhere in the city except for special, posted exceptions? Stay tuned. Or better yet volunteer to be the ANC Traffic Comm. liaison with the CBAC.

The Beacon St. RR bridge meeting of June 23
About 50 people came to Baldwin Hall on 6/23 for the joint Somerville-Cambridge information meeting on the Beacon St. RR bridge. George Conway, project manager for the State Highway Dept., which is building the new bridge, said that, barring further construction problems or an early winter, it could be finished next January (1993). The bridge will remain 1-way northbound throughout construction. He said the bridge will look like the one over the RR tracks on Mass. Ave. next to the Porter T station. A full traffic light will be installed at the Somerville Ave.-bridge intersection.

Intense interest in reconfiguring the top of Oxford, the #83 bus, and shared Somerville-Cambridge street traffic patterns led that night to the formation of a Joint Somerville-Cambridge Traffic Committee (see next item).

The Joint Somerville-Cambridge Traffic Committee.
17 Cambridge & Somerville residents signed up to serve on the Joint Somerville-Cambridge Traffic Committee which will have its first meeting Tuesday 10/20. Its initial agenda is getting the concrete peninsula designed and executed by next spring, returning the #83 bus to upper Beacon, and re-evaluation of the current 1-way, 2-way pattern of neighborhood streets. Cambridge Traffic & Parking Deputy Dir. Lauren Preston and Somerville Acting Traffic & Parking Dir. Anne Johnson are in charge of scheduling the meetings and executing the recommendations of the committee. Many thanks to the 8 Agassiz residents who signed up: Keene Metzger and Virginia Smith of Oxford St., Ethan Gould of Crescent St., Albert Stillman of Sacramento St., Jim O’Neill of Forest St., Charles Ash of Eustis St., and David Santomamma of Wendell St.

Return of the #83 bus to Beacon St.
After 18 years of MBTA promises that the #83 bus would return as soon as there was a new RR bridge, the T is getting cold feet — despite the fact that a 34-signature petition generated at the 6/23 bridge meeting was signed by an equal number of Somerville and Cambridge residents, and earlier lobbying in favor of its return to upper Beacon by City Councillor Alice Wolf, City Mgr. Robert Healy, the Cambridge City Council and the Star Market VP. for Operations. Some Somerville municipal officials are now lobbying the T for a compromise solution which will serve no one well. Astrid Dodds & Charles Ash will shortly organize another petition campaign — this one at the Beacon St. Star Market, with the support of the Star Market manager. If you can help, call Astrid at 354-6553.
**The Whistler October 1992**

**Avon Associates**
1675 Mass. Ave.
Apt. Rentals ■ Sales
661-8400

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**The future of the ANC Traffic/Transportation Committee**

The work of the ANC Traffic Comm. during the past year can continue only if a core group of a dozen people materialize who can meet monthly for an hour and a half (inviting municipal officials to one of them every 3 months). As you can see from the above list, "traffic" in the Agassiz neighborhood spins off in many different directions each of which deserves someone's sustained attention. We need your input. Come to the ANC Traffic Committee meeting Thurs., Oct. 29, 7:30-9, ANC Community Room, North Hall, corner of Wendell and Oxford.

Many Thanks to the following people for their advice and assistance on traffic/transportation matters in recent months: Deputy City Manager Richard Rossi Deputy Director of Traffic and Parking Lauren Preston, City Arborist Jack Kelly, DPW Deputy Commissioner Jeff Nutting, City Councillors Frank Duehay and Alice Wolf, and George Conway, project manager for the railroad bridge rebuilding project.

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Editors Note: And many thanks to Astrid Dodds for preparing this report and countless hours working on these issues.

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**JUNE Toxic Waste Collection**

The day was a success disaster. Sponsored by the City Dept. of Health and Hospitals, and very well publicized, the turnout was greater than expected. Participating citizens were greeted by 90 minute long lines, and disgruntled staff. If you were among the disheartened participants, please call your favorite city councilor or the Commissioner of Health and Hospitals and stress that the solution is not less publicity but better planning and more frequent toxic waste days.

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**Crime Watch**

We have received crime reports from Police Commissioner Anderson's office. We are advised that City wide crimes have decreased by 9%, and violent crimes decreased by 15% over the same time period last year. The crimes with the largest declines were burglary, robbery and auto theft. The crime analysis unit predicts that those three categories will register the lowest annual totals since the 1960's.

City wide crimes that increased included rape, up by 50% "with the late reporting of 1991 incidents and the small numbers skewing the statistics." Larceny increased as "thefts from buildings in the city's business areas are fueling this increase."

Quarterly crime reports have been promised to the neighborhoods, and The Whistler will report them as they are received.

The following are City wide statistics comparing the first eight months of 1991 to 1992:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRIME</th>
<th>1/1-8/31/91</th>
<th>1/1-8/31/92</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>+50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>-26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny</td>
<td>2,172</td>
<td>2,251</td>
<td>+4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Theft</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Index Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,312</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,941</strong></td>
<td><strong>-9%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Commissioner Anderson's office prepared separate reports for each neighborhood in the City. Below are excerpts from the report on the Agassiz neighborhood, also known as Neighborhood 8.

The Agassiz Area receives between 1,800 and 2,000 calls for service each year which account for 3% of the citywide total. Between 3 and 4 percent of the serious crime in the city each year occurs in Neighborhood 8. Housebreaks, the major crime problem in this area, have been on a steady decline over the past 5 years. Agassiz, which once averaged 90 to 100 housebreaks per year is projected to total 25-30 in 1992. When a street robbery does go down here (only 3 in the first 6 month of 1992), the scenario is that of a weekend night, late PM hours at the intersections of Mass and Wendell or Oxford and Sacramento. Occasional weekend pattern of tire slashing usually associated with Somerville juveniles.

Comparative statistics for our neighborhood for a 6 month period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRIME</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housebreaks</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Robbery</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Theft</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny from MV</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>+114%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malicious Destruction</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Arrests</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To receive a complete copy of the Crime Report, please call the council at 349-6287.
At this time I would like to focus on one of the provisions of the proposal which encourages the formation of an "oversight" committee. The function of this group is to be vigilant of city and architectural decisions, to address unresolved issues, (i.e. traffic, parking, sewer construction, additional play space, and etc.), and to report to the neighborhood through the council.

The strength of the proposal, which can now serve as a "framework" for further progress, is due to the wide range of views that were represented by the participants this summer. Opposing arguments were discussed with the city, school committee, architectural and neighborhood information; compromises were reached; and remaining issues and disagreements will be addressed.

In the same spirit of working together, our new oversight committee must include additional voices which were not previously represented, such as: The Agassiz School, The Agassiz Neighborhood School, (the pre-school and after school programs), Wendell St. residents, gardeners, and etc. A carefully composed committee will help to insure informed recommendations and positive response from a unified school and neighborhood community. Therefore, this is one more opportunity to participate with the city to build a well thought out educational facility without damaging what is a wonderfully diverse neighborhood.

Jerry Alexander

Next Neighborhood Step:
Oversight Committee Tuesday October 13
7:30 p.m.
Agassiz Community Center 20 Sacramento St.
to plan the oversight committee as recommended in the flyer "A Proposal for the New Agassiz School". See below:

According to the flyer:

Neighborhood involvement in the design process. This proposal specifies only a framework. The step-by-step design process will resolve the details of the plan, which must respond to the foregoing concerns. A neighborhood oversight committee will be formed which will report on a regular basis to the neighborhood council and the community at large.

This committee must be structured to meet the above mentioned needs, and this meeting will address in practical terms how to make it happen.

If you have ideas, but cannot attend the meeting, please drop a note at 20 Sacramento, or call the council at 349-6287.

Historical Commission Report on Agassiz

At the council meeting on September 16, Charles Sullivan said there would be a Historical Commission Hearing in November on the Agassiz School. A study was done on the Agassiz School by the commission but we have not yet received the report on the findings. For more information, call the council at 349-6287, and we put your name on our list to receive information, or call Charles Sullivan at the Historical Commission 349-4000.
Cultural Happenings

"Small Abstractions" by Mitch Villani
A show of small paintings will begin on October 6 and run through October 27 in the Sacramento St. Gallery. The gallery will open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays.

The artist, Mitch Villani, graduated from The Museum School in 1958 and has exhibited mostly on the East Coast, having been featured at Symphony Hall and the prestigious "2" Collection at WGBH. He is a member of the Copley Society, The Cambridge Art Association, The Boston Visual Artists Union and the Artists Production Company. He has been awarded numerous awards and prizes and was represented for years by the Broomfield Gallery. He is now retired and lives year round in Provincetown.

LOOK FOR UPCOMING SHOWS in the Sacramento St. Gallery

♦ NOVEMBER will feature a show of student work from the Agassiz Illustrative Studio. The show will be curated by Cortney Skinner, Artist and Director of the Studio for 5-8th grade youth.

♦ DECEMBER will feature Holiday Crafts Sale and Show with hand made items including porcelain, scarves, candles, jewelry and more.

Seniors News

Friendly Connection
On October 23, the Cambridge Council on Aging and the L.I.F.E. Program are planning a very special Multi Cultural Event at the Youville Hospital for Nursing Home Residents from Cambridge and Somerville.

This group of very special people are very often the most forgotten members of our Community. The Cambridge Council on Aging has developed a program called "FRIENDLY CONNECTION". This program attempts to do what its name implies, connect people from the Cambridge Community to these special often extremely lonely individuals.

Can you help with a donation of food? Call Donna Johnson or Johanna Chau at 349-6220.

Cambridge Newslines for Seniors
Did You Know that the Council on Aging has a newsletter especially for seniors, entitled Newslines. For more information on how to receive this newsletter, call 349-6220.

Council Programs

MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL Awards Grant to ANC
The Agassiz Neighborhood Council is the recipient of a grant in the amount of $2,600 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to support the 5th grade Afterschool Arts.

The funds will provide scholarships and tuition free opportunities for students in music, dance, drama and visual arts. For more information on our Afterschool Arts, contact Steve Winter at 349-6287.

Sacramento St. Preschool Still Accepting Students
The Sacramento St. Preschool, which operates 5 days a week from 9 a.m. to Noon on the Cambridge Public School Calendar, has openings in its 5 day program. The program is licensed by the Mass. Office for Children and costs $245 per month. For more information or a tour of the program, call Steve Winter at 349-6287.

Agassiz Afterschool Programs
There are a few openings in the various Afterschool options provided by the ANC. Call Steve Winter at 349-6287 for availability, information, and a tour of the various programs available to all Cambridge students in grades K-8.

North Hall Open House Thursday 10/15
The Community Room is officially open, and Harvard is hosting an Open House for both Harvard affiliates and community members.

North Hall Community Room Open House
Thursday October 15th
4-7 p.m. at 1651 Mass. Ave.
The former Quality Inn.

Remarks will be made around 5:30, and there will be tours to see a typical dorm room at 4:30 and 6 p.m.
Everyone in the community is invited to get acquainted with our new space which now has an entry way all its own with a private elevator and walkways from both Wendell St. and Mass. Ave. New landscaping has been done all around and in the parking lot. (This event was originally scheduled for Sunday 10/18)
Beginning with October, Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meetings will be held in the community room. The Election Commission is evaluating the space as a possible polling place for Ward 7 Precincts One and Two.
School Volunteers Needed

Educating our children is too important to be left to the schools alone. The Cambridge School Volunteers invites you to help us help kids learn. Your time and talents can really make a difference in a child's life. People of all ages are needed to tutor academic subjects, teach English as a second language to students from South America, Africa, Vietnam, Haiti and the Cape Verde Islands to name a few of the many countries represented in the Cambridge school system. We need volunteers to work closely with teachers in the classrooms and also in the libraries. Just two hours a week CAN make a difference. For more information, please call Antonia, 349-6794.

Synchronized Swimming Classes

Cambridge Synchronized Swimming is recruiting new swimmers for the team. They are looking for swimmers between the ages of 8-18. Swimmers 15-18 should be skilled in breaststroke, able to swim at least 20 lengths of a 25yard pool, and attempt to swim one length underwater.

Classes are held every Saturday from 11 a.m. - Noon.
For more information, call Leslie Sciaseca, Head Coach 868-8801.

Marcie Mitler, M. Ed. announces two classes. Space is limited so call her to reserve at 497-5283.
RECLAIMING YOUR BODY-A one day workshop/support gathering at the Cambridge YWCA
for women who have survived sexual abuse.
Saturday October 24 from 1-4 p.m. Cost $30.
PARTNERS OF SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE:
An evening gathering.
November 19 from 7-10 p.m. Cost $30.

Sacramento St. Condo For Sale

6+ Sunny Rooms/1,475 Sq. Ft. 2nd and 3rd Floors of Victorian 2 family. 1.5 baths, Modern Kitchen, Deck, 1/2 driveway. $179,500. Call owner at 491-4684
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 7, Wednesday</td>
<td>Yom Kippur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 12, Monday</td>
<td>Columbus Day Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 13, Tuesday</td>
<td>7:30 p.m. Agassiz School Overview Committee First Organizational Meeting Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 15, Thursday</td>
<td>4-7 p.m. Open House for New Agassiz Community Room North Hall - 1651 Mass. Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 20, Tuesday</td>
<td>5-7 p.m. Joint Somerville Cambridge Traffic Committee Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 22, Thursday</td>
<td>7:30-9:30 p.m. Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting Community Room North Hall 1651 Mass. Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 29, Thursday</td>
<td>7:30-9 p.m. Agassiz Traffic Committee Meeting Community Room North Hall 1651 Mass. Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 31, Saturday</td>
<td>Halloween</td>
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**The Whistler**

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

DO NOT FORWARD

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