Neighborhood Council News

**Please Note:** The ANC only calls neighborhood wide meetings as needed in the summer, but committee work goes on. Summer updates are provided in this issue.

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**Notes from the June 20 ANC Meeting**

**Agassiz School Construction**

The first item of business was Agassiz School construction. The order for the contractor to finish the school on time, the company requested that the work hours be extended. There were objections from abutters concerned with noise. It was finally agreed to extend the hours of construction work from 7:00 A.M. to 9:30 P.M., with no noisy work or deliveries after 3:30 P.M. The late hours would be used for quieter finishing work. Rich Rossi, Deputy City Manager, agreed to meet residents at the site after the first day of extended hours, July 5, to hear concerns.

**Housing After Rent Control**

Susan Schlesinger, Assistant City Manager and Roger Herzog, Housing Project Manager for Community Development, explained their work to date in developing programs to mitigate the impact of the loss of rent control in Cambridge. Susan explained that the City has 40,000 housing units in the City, 15,000 of which were rent controlled. Affordable housing is clearly threatened, and the City has developed a booklet that explains their efforts entitled "CITYHOME, a New Housing Program for the City of Cambridge."

Some areas discussed include assistance in the form of classes and financing programs for new home owners, assistance to non profits to buy buildings, incentives for property owners to set aside some units as affordable, and to play a role in federal programs for affordable housing.

The ANC has several useful pamphlets provided by the Community Development Department including "CITYHOME, a New Housing Program for the City of Cambridge" and "Becoming a Homeowner" which provides a wealth of information for people who are considering a purchase. Both are available by calling the ANC at 349-6287.

Kathy Spiegelman, Director of Planning; Susan Keller, Housing Director; and Happy Green, Director of Community Relations, represented Harvard. Kathy discussed Harvard’s current thinking on the future use of their previously rent controlled units, which numbered 700. She said Harvard wants to be responsible to its protected tenants, and Harvard wants to do its fair share to help develop affordable housing. The transference of buildings to the City of Cambridge as affordable housing is one solution, although the number of units would be small in comparison to the need. Some housing would be sold to tenants others to affiliates as they were vacated. Harvard would like to transfer some property for use as affiliate, rather than open housing. An idea that concerned tenant activist Joanne Preston. She fears this will increase the transient population and drive up the cost of rents. There were also fears that no affordable units would be left in Agassiz neighborhood.

No decisions have been finalized, and Kathy was looking for feedback from the neighbors. She agreed to return to the council with more concrete information after discussions are held with the City.

**New Parent Representative on ANC Board**

Paul Lenart is the newest member of the ANC Board of Directors. He is replacing Janet Ruslow (who is still on the board but no longer parent representative). Paul lived in the Agassiz neighborhood for 17 years until recently moving to Fayerweather St. He has a daughter at the Agassiz School and in the Agassiz Afterschool Program.

Paul is a free-lance musician/composer/audio engineer. We are delighted to have him with us for a two year term.

**ANC has a Notary**

The ANC now has a notary on staff at 20 Sacramento St. Kelly Tyler can notarize documents for you between 9 A.M. and 3 P.M. most days. Please call ahead to be sure she will be available. Documents will be notarized for the personal business of community members.

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**Next Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting**

**In the New AGASSIZ SCHOOL Library**

**28 Sacramento Street**

**Tuesday, September 19, 7:30 P.M.**

1. Joe Joseph - North Cambridge
   Discussion on City Liquor Cap
2. Terry Lurie - Cambridge Housing Authority
   Presentation of plans for Garfield St. housing

(See page 2 for more details)
Garfield Street Housing Moves Ahead

During the summer committee members met with Terry Lurie to help select a team to develop the vacant lot at the corner of Garfield St. and Mass. Ave. into public housing. There will be eight units, each with a parking space. Half will be two bedroom units, the other half will be three bedroom units. The developer chosen is The Equity Company, the architect, Neprud Eisen Associates and the contractor, Charlesgate Construction.

The building is designed to fit the Queen Anne Style of the neighborhood with its bay, hip roof, gable and porches. Other details such as projecting eaves, wood railings, string courses and shingles and siding are also proposed to add to the neighborhood feel. The site is configured to minimize the fact that eight units are located in the building. The building is designed to create the appearance of two larger attached homes each with a front porch and a main entrance. The building is set fifteen feet back from Garfield Street and farther away from Mass. Ave. Separate entrances for all eight units gives residents direct access to outdoor space as well as some space for play areas and gardening.

The vent shaft, located in front of the view shown above, will be screened by fences and shrubs. Two walkways, located on either side of the vent shaft, will lead back to the front entrances of the ground floor units. More trees and shrubs surround the walkways between the vent shaft and the entrances to the units.

Parking is located behind the building and extends onto the back tail of the parcel. Six parking spaces are located outside and another two are located in a garage underneath the second floor. More fencing and planting will buffer paring from the abutting properties. An additional two or three trees will be planted along the driveway adjacent to 16 Garfield St. to create more visual separation.

For more information about the developer, architect or contractor, or about the project in general, call the council office at 349-6287, or come to the 9/19 Council meeting where the plans will be presented. (See page 1 for details.)

Mass. Ave. Planning Committee Begins Work

There have been two organizational meetings, one in June, another in August to determine the agenda for a joint neighborhood committee that will consider planning issues along the Mass. Ave. corridor from Cambridge Common to Porter Square.

The first meeting produced topic areas to be discussed in the upcoming months. Three separate working groups, listed below, have been suggested, while others may be added. The group wanted to begin this fall with the issue of transportation. The process is expected to run about one year.

1. Transportation (parking, signalization, traffic enforcement, pedestrian safety, bicycle lanes, bus service)
2. Commercial use (scale of commercial district, small business retention, housing on Mass. Ave., institutional planning i.e. Lesley College, zoning)
3. Urban design (landscaping)

City Councillor Frank Duhey was invited to the second meeting to provide some information on other planning processes in Cambridge. Residents from the Porter Square area were added to Agassiz and Neighborhood Nine at this meeting.

Frank stressed the importance of citizen action in planning. He suggested the recent Central Square Coalition as a possible model for this group. They developed wide participation in their process including public hearings. They incorporated changes and refinements throughout the process, and worked with the City Manager for action.

The next meeting will be held on September 12, 7:30 P.M. in the Community Room at 1651 Mass. Ave. (corner of Wendell). At this meeting, an agenda will be organized for the October meeting. Possible speakers will be considered, as will ways of developing citizen participation including meetings and surveys.

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**Join the Committee for Mass. Ave. Planning**

**Next Meeting September 12, Tuesday**

7:30 P.M. in the Community Room

1651 Mass. Ave. (corner of Wendell)

This meeting will help develop the agenda for a large community meeting in October.

Join this exciting new group of residents from Agassiz, Neighborhood Nine and the Porter Square area to discuss issues of planning along the Mass. Ave. corridor from the Common to Porter Square.

See article above for more specific information, or call the ANC at 349-6287 to be on the mailing list.
Flooding on the night of July 29

Many residents in the Agassiz neighborhood experienced flooding on the night of July 29 and others on August 3. While the flooding was less severe than in other years, ANC heard from fourteen neighbors who reported water in their homes.

Agassiz flooding is almost an annual event. Any sudden heavy rain may cause flooding. It occurs in almost the exact same two week period every summer.

Concern about the length of time the sludge remained on streets was expressed by neighbors on Carver, Wendell, Crescent and Hammond Streets. While the ANC did contact the DPW, it wasn't until the next rain came that the stench and the sludge was removed. Many residents were concerned with the sludge as a public health issue, and felt the City should act immediately after a flood.

When reconstruction of the sewer is complete, flooding should abate. The work is complete from the Charles River to Quincy Street, but construction must work its way up to Oxford St. ANC has invited Steve White, Asst. Commissioner from the DPW, to visit our October council meeting and give the neighborhood an update on the progress of that project.

Check The Whistler in October for details.

Cambridge Mental Health Association is 40

There will be an Annual Meeting and Birthday Party Open House on the evening of Thursday September 28 at the Cambridge Youth Guidance Center, 5 Sacramento St. The Birthday Party begins at 5:30 P.M.

There will be presentations from the staff about communicating with children of all ages. The Family After-School Program and the Family Advocacy, Stabilization and Support Team will be on hand to talk about their projects and lead tours. Call them at 354-2275 for more information.

CMHA recently received a contract of $500,000 from the Department of Mental Health for its Family Advocacy, Stabilization, and Support Team (FASST). It is the first project of the Cambridge-Somerville Community Service Partners, Inc.

Traffic and Transportation

Oxford St. to Reopen

Residents have strong opinions about Oxford Street. Some would like to see it permanently closed, others dread this idea. The strategic planning for Oxford Street, a long term Agassiz project, was temporarily tabled due to construction of the Agassiz School which necessitated the Oxford St. closing.

Earlier work of the traffic committee focused on making Oxford a safe and pleasant neighborhood street, rather than a short cut for motorists from Porter Square to mid Cambridge. Lights at Everett and Forest Streets helped reduce traffic speed. The truck ban helped quiet the street down. Many other efforts including signage and crosswalk painting have helped improve Oxford St. for residents. The reconfiguration of Oxford St. at the Porter Square end was a project that was tabled when Oxford St. closed.

It is time to reconvene and reopen planning for Oxford Street. Chair David Valenstein will set a meeting in early October. If you would like to be part of this discussion, please call the council to be on the mailing list. A booklet called "Take Back Your Streets," recommended by Astrid Dodds and published in May by the Conservation Law Foundation provides many ideas. Call the Council at 349-6287 to borrow a copy.

Crime Watch

Crime Statistics

The table below will provide you with a comparison of crime City-wide in Cambridge for the first 6 months of 1995. ANC will provide neighborhood statistics as they become available.

Commissioner Anderson noted in his report that the City registered a 7.6% increase in serious crime for the first 6 months of 1995. Violent Crime (-11%) decreased and property crime (+11.4%) increased.

<table>
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<th>1/1-6/30/94</th>
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<td>2849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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City Wide

New License Commissioner

Cambridge License Commission has a new Chairperson. Benjamin Barnes had been appointed by the City Manager, and he will begin after Labor Day.

Plan to Ease Rent Control Changes

Earlier this year, Cambridge Community Development developed a one year interim plan, known as IPOD, to ease the charges that would be brought about by the loss of rent control. The regulations were developed to keep affordable housing and the neighborhood character.

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This was not approved by City Council. They requested that Community Development take a further look at the issues allowing for more community input and providing specific recommendations for different parts of the City.

Community Development is back at the drawing board looking at sections of the City to make recommendations. Over the fall they will be hosting meetings for community members. At a meeting held in August, several good suggestions were made by participants to increase participation. Ideas included visiting various neighborhood organizations as part of the neighborhood's own agenda and trying to make the information less technical so it could be understood by the average citizen.

It is hoped that a plan will be finalized early next year.

Cambridge Recycling News

Composters for Sale

Robert Winters reports that the 1,000th composter was sold this August in Cambridge, and backyard composters are still available for purchase by residents for the super low price of $16 thanks to a joint program sponsored by the Department of Public Works (DPW), Cambridge Recycling Inc., and the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection.

There are other types of composters available, and they all can be purchased at the DPW, 147 Hampshire St. Tuesday and Thursdays from 4:30-6:30 P.M. and Saturdays from 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Call Robert Winters of Cambridge Recycling Inc. at 661-9230 for more information.

CHECK THE NEWSPAPERS IN OCTOBER FOR INFORMATION ABOUT MORE RECYCLABLE MATERIALS THAT WILL BE PICKED UP AT YOUR CURB

Community School

For Information on All Programs
Call Jody Garber at 349-6287.

Afterschool

Programs Open Monday September 11th
For Information on Fall 2023
Call 349-6287 for more information.

Sacramento Street Preschool

Program Opens Monday September 11th
For Information on Fall 2023
Call 349-6287 for more information.

New Evening Programs

Programs for teens will begin this fall under the auspices of Cambridge Department of Human Services Youth Programs. Bob Goodwin, Program Manager for Youth Programs, will be in the Agassiz School this fall to recruit young teens for this program scheduled on Monday evenings.

There will be evening gym programs including basketball for adults. If you are interested in more information on these programs, please call the Council at 349-6287 to be on the mailing list. These programs are scheduled to begin in October.

Announcements

Piano Lessons

Ada Park Snider, long time Agassiz resident, is offering lessons for children and adults in her home studio on Prentiss Street, just two blocks from the new Agassiz School building. Classically trained in both voice and piano, Ada has a broad range of interests in music, and works with each student in the student's choice of style(s). Come solo, with a friend, or even a group. Piano/keyboard technique, voice, theory, and electronic keyboard sequencing available. Call Ada at 661-2961.

New AA Women's Group

There will be a new AA Women's Discussion Group forming in the Agassiz neighborhood that will meet at 20 Sacramento St. or Monday evenings from 6:30-7:30 P.M. beginning September 11.

For information call Lisa: 497-2264.

A Message from JoAnn Hoffman

Thank you for caring.
I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all my friends and neighbors who have shown their outpouring of love and help since my sudden illness.
We all have neighbors who need help from time to time whether with bringing in groceries or putting the garbage bins on the sidewalk. Helping each other is one of the things that makes a neighborhood closer. I am working hard for recovery, and all your support and love helps the fight.
AGASSIZ SCHOOL NEWS

Note on Solving Construction Problems

The collaborative response to our needs during this project was smoothed thanks to help from Deputy City Manager Rich Rossi and City staff, Kam Patel and Eastern Construction and George Medgler and staff at HMGH Architects.

A special thanks to members of Rich Rossi’s office, Maryellen Corello and Diane Squires, who listened to our concerns and complaints both large and small called in from the hot line. They acted without delay and contacted the right people to provide solutions wherever possible. Their professional behavior and good humor helped to ease the burden of this construction project on the neighborhood.

And thanks to the Agassiz Neighbors who put up with noise, dirt, lack of parking and truck traffic so we could have a wonderful new school in the Agassiz neighborhood!

Agassiz Construction Near Completion

As The Whistler goes to press, the Agassiz School is scheduled to open on time! The school will open on Thursday, September 7, but the schedule is extremely tight. The usual details will remain to be finished, but all should be completed by the end of September. Principal Eva Paddock, has been in her office since mid-August, and all the children except the kindergartners will be in their classrooms as scheduled. Kindergartners will begin Monday September 11th.

Beside details, the only major work not scheduled to be completed on time is the parking lot adjacent to the Tot Lot at 105 Oxford St. In the gym, basketball standards will not be installed. However, all this work should be complete by the end of September. Trees will be planted in October.

Parents and students have been invited to an orientation to be held on Wednesday September 6 between 3-6:30 P.M. in order for them to find their way on the first day. The ANC, with the Agassiz School, is planning, a Gala Open House for a Sunday in mid-October. This will be a day of fun events for children and adults of all ages, plus a time to look all through our wonderful new school. Check The Whistler for more information in October.

Summer Log of Calls to the Construction Hot Line

5/30 Caller advised that children were on the field. Advised caller to call police and Contacted city about fencing.

6/5 Caller was concerned that Oxford was being accessed by drivers who moved barrels. Requested more vigilance in from contractor and that police take note.

6/5 Caller was concerned that traffic light was off after work was completed in the evening. Contacted City to request that police return light to functioning each evening.

6/5 Caller was concerned with noise on the basketball court. Advised caller to ask users to turn down music or call police. Contacted City to post signs.

6/8 Caller concerned with excessive speeding on Sacramento St. between Oxford and Carver. Called city to spot check.

6/8 Caller who used new tot lot located on Sacramento Field was concerned about several unfinished areas. Advised caller that details would be finished within the week.

6/9 Caller was concerned with hours of construction. Advised caller about ANC meeting to discuss that on 6/20.

6/13 Caller was concerned with the smell of the portable toilets. City advised us that toilets are cleaned once a week. If neighborhood feels it necessary, they will clean more often.

6/14 Caller abutting school concerned with loud construction prior to 6:30 am. City advised that there are many contractors working now, and they will all be spoken to about noise issues.

6/19 Caller concerned with construction vehicles blocking driveway. Called to remind contractor to be aware of neighbors need to get in and out.

6/21 Caller, in regard to previous night’s council meeting, said extended hours would be acceptable.

6/21 Caller said contractor began again at 6:20 A.M. City said that there were many new contractors on site who would be spoken to about early hours.

6/21 Caller was concerned with the size of the kiosk and asked about its function. Architect advised that kiosk in front of school was actually a vent from the kitchen.

6/24 Caller said that noise from construction was very loud.

6/26 Caller was concerned that site was not secure, and people were walking in. Advised City to secure site.

7/5 Caller was concerned with large and loud trucks using detour on Wendell. Called city and reported the trucks.

7/12 Caller concerned about goal posts and bench placement. Contacted architect who said there was no conflict.

7/19 Caller was concerned with raccoons and overflow of garbage cans next to tot lot on Oxford St. Called the City to empty garbage and do so on a schedule.

8/7 Caller requested that barriers be checked twice a day at Wendell and Oxford as they were being moved. Called city and advised them to have contractor check.

8/16 Caller said contractor began work at 5:45 am. Contractor spoke to offending subcontractor.

8/17 Caller was concerned that trucks delivering to school were forcing pedestrians and bicyclists onto newly seeded lawn. Called City to request that contractor provide for sidewalk.

8/21 Caller requested that dumpster be emptied on Oxford St. Called and dumpster was emptied.
Cultural Happenings

Sacramento Street Gallery

The Sacramento St. Gallery will hold its Grand Reopening in October with photographs developed by community and board member Sue Bergin. Sue has put together an impressive portfolio of black and white photos of the old Agassiz School, which will be shown in the gallery all October. Check The Whistler in October for details.

Performing Arts at Agassiz

Plans have been in the works for a performing arts series which include story telling, drama, video, music, and dance performances for children. The events were intended to show off the new Agassiz stage and to make creative use of Agassiz School half days throughout the school year. Since the recent decision to abolish half days, our program has had to be revamped. Look for the Opening Performance at the GALA OPEN HOUSE this October, and check The Whistler for future events.

Lesley College

Lesley Master Plan

Discussions continue with Lesley regarding their Master Plan, which includes the consolidation of their campuses at Porter Exchange in Porter Square and at their original location between Wendell and Everett Sts. The discussions center around how the Lesley Plan will effect residents and the neighborhood. A committee composed of Dennis Carlone, Architect, Lesley representatives, and community members including Ann Avery, Ken Basler, Adrian Bishko, Jack Cunha, Ellen Friedman, Richard Griffin, Jack Josephs (Neighborhood 9 Association), Susan Kasihwa, and Fred Levy, is currently working on these issues. For more information, call the council at 349-6287.

Harvard University

Harvard Real Estate is Reorganized

Harvard Real Estate has merged with Harvard Planning. This is a move in the Central Administration to consolidate planning, following a multi-year academic planning process.

Kathy Spiegelman, head of the department now called Harvard Planning and Real Estate, explains "In a time of diminishing resources, this merger allows us to pool resources, provide more coordinated and effective service delivery, eliminate overlaps, and identify greater efficiencies" in letter to the community.

Seniors

Central Square Senior Center to Open this Fall

Look for the Grand Opening of the Cambridge Senior’s Center in October. The huge new facility is located at 806 Mass. Ave. across from City Hall, and it will provide meals, recreational and educational programs, medical information and a clinic, and a sun deck.

Call the Cambridge Council on Aging for more information at 349-6220.

Survey to Determine Program Needs

The ANC sent out a survey in early summer to help determine program needs for residents over 55 years of age. The survey was developed in light of the new Senior Center opening this fall, and it was sent to all registered voters age 55 or older in the Agassiz neighborhood, 250 in all. This was not intended to be a scientific survey, rather a way to develop a mailing list of interested folks and get an idea of their needs.

The majority of respondents wanted to tour the new senior center. Several people felt they were still too young to use the center, others had no interest in the center, but the majority said they would probably give the new center a try. There was an even split between people who said they would use the center if transportation were provided and those who said they would get there on their own (walking, public transportation or driving). When asked about other programs they used in the City, many respondents said they were still working, and very few used other programs.

There were many good suggestions regarding future programs including career assistance, discount programs, exercise and health related programs, travel assistance, legal assistance, financial planning and computers, crafts, and cooking.

When asked if there were any programs that should be neighborhood based, working with children at Agassiz School was mentioned as was transportation, a way to meet neighbors, a meeting place within walking distance, and a phone call system.

We asked respondents what they believed were the most important issues facing them in the upcoming years, and the response was overwhelmingly health and housing related. Crime and safety on the streets was also on the list.

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The Whistler September 1995
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Thanks to all donors who contributed to our Annual Fund for a total of $3,503! This money will fund our Thanksgiving Pot Luck, Annual Meeting, Family Folk Dance Evening and Gala Open House for the new Agassiz. It will also provide staff for one evening of gym activities all year, Whistler deliveries, and Neighborhood Improvement Grants.

Contributions are tax deductible!

Miriam Adam and Dave Edelman
Century 21 Avon
Randy Byers and Danielle Levi-Alvarez
Charles Beye
Steve and Judy Leff
Central Barbershop
Dana Realty
Mary Donaldson
Daria Donnelly and Steven Weissburg
Lydia and Anthony Enos
Richard Griffin and Susan Keane
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Katharine de Zengotita
Betsy Rudnick and Bruce Posner
... and several Anonymous donors
Community Calendar
SEPTEMBER 1995

September 4, Monday
Labor Day

September 7, Thursday
Cambridge Public Schools Open

September 11, Monday
Agassiz Afterschool Programs Open

September 12, Tuesday
7:30 P.M.
Mass. Ave. Planning Committee
Community Room, 1651 Mass. Ave. (at Wendell)

September 19, Tuesday
6:30 P.M.
Agassiz Neighborhood Council Board Meeting
7:30 P.M.
Agassiz Neighborhood Council Monthly Meeting
Agassiz School Library, 28 Sacramento St.

September 24, Monday
Rosh Hashanah begins at Sundown

Look for the Gala Agassiz School Open House Date in October.
Activities and fun for the whole family!

Reach us by FAX 497-4388, or by CompuServe E-Mail at 74372.1770 @ compuserve.com

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.

SEPTEMBER 1995
The Whistler
Agassiz Neighborhood Council
20 Sacramento St.
Cambridge, MA 02138
349-6287

DO NOT FORWARD

Agassiz Afterschool
The Agassiz Afterschool, full and part time, will open on MONDAY SEPTEMBER 11. Kindergartners will be walked to 20 Sacramento St., and the 1st-5th graders will meet in the Agassiz School. The Community Room located at 1651 Mass. Ave. will be used for special classes and programs for middle school (grades 6-8).

You may register in person or by mail. There are several interesting new activities for K-5th grade including chess, woodworking, and Buffalo Tales (stories and activities about Native Americans). The regular standards will also be offered: drama, visual art, cooking, music and much, much more.

Programs for 6-8th graders will begin later in September.

Sacramento Street Preschool
The Sacramento Street Preschool, taught by Diane DiMama, provides a half day morning program for children ages 2 years nine months to 4 years of age. This small, developmentally based program offers options of days and time for parents to choose.

For all programs, call 349-6287 to receive a brochure, for more information or to visit.

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