

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

February 2009

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ANC News

NOTES FROM THE FEB. 25 MEETING

Cambridge Postal Customer Advisory Group

Cambridge Postmaster Katherine Lydon is seeking additional volunteer members to join the Postal Customer Advisory Group, established in 1990. The Advisory Group, which meets monthly, has helped foster a continuing dialogue between Cambridge and the United States Post Office. Joanne F. Killackey-Hogan, Customer Relations Coordinator for the Cambridge Postal Service, told the Council that the group has seven members but no representation from Agassiz or Porter Square.

Ms. Killackey-Hogan stated, "The Advisory Group encourages feedback from the community. For example, community input has helped us to gain insight into customers' service concerns, and as a result, the Postmaster was able to take specific actions to help improve service." For more information, or to voice issues or con-

cerns, residents are invited to contact Ms. Killackey-Hogan at (617) 578-8738 or Joanne.F.Killackey@usps.gov.

City Officials and Residents Discuss Oxford Street Traffic

"The intention of this evening's discussion," announced Stephen Diamond, Meeting Chair of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, "is to invite residents to express their concerns about traffic on Oxford Street, particularly in light of the fatal accident at the corner of Oxford and Wendell."

City representatives attending the meeting included Cambridge Police Commissioner Robert C. Haas, Lieutenant and Traffic Enforcement Unit Commanding Officer Jack Albert, Police Sergeant Kathleen Murphy, Sue Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, Cara Seiderman of Cambridge Community Development, Jeff Postell, Captain of Public Safety at Lesley University, and City Councillors Henrietta Davis and Craig Kelley.

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



FEB. 25 - 7:30 PM

Baldwin School Cafeteria
28 Sacramento Street
(Press buzzer for entry)

AGENDA

Updates on:

- **"Living Well: A Guide to Senior Services in Cambridge"**
- Strategic planning for ABC's aging in place program **STICK**
- Lesley University's **Centennial Campus Plan and Zoning Proposal**
- **Community Discussion** of Lesley Zoning Proposal

Police Report

Lieutenant Albert described the accident, clarifying that, due to the ongoing investigation, public information about the accident was limited:

At 3:15 PM on Tuesday, January 6, Medford resident Helen Chin was walking down Wendell St. to visit a friend. A car, driving toward Harvard Sq., entered the intersection and struck Ms. Chin while she was in the pedestrian crossing. Police have estimated that the car was traveling at approximately 5 miles per hour. Ms. Chin was treated at the scene by E.M.S. personnel and transported to Mass. General Hospital, where she later succumbed to her injuries.

Police reported that there were no other vehicles or obstructions in the intersection and that the driver, a resident of Lawrence, had not experienced sun glare. The driver of the vehicle told the police that she did not know why she didn't see Ms. Chin. An eyewitness to the accident provided additional information to the police.

At the time of ANC meeting, the Cambridge Police Department (CPD) attributed the cause of the accident to "operator inattentiveness" and said there was no indication that roadway conditions or speed had an impact. Currently, there are no charges in the case.

As per residents' request, CPD reviewed data

related to vehicle accidents on Oxford Street in the Agassiz neighborhood and found that, since 2001, there have been a total of three vehicle/pedestrian accidents that resulted in minor injuries. The police stated that, since Oxford is a very busy street, hosting eight to nine thousand car trips per day, they expect that some incidents will occur. They noted that numerous factors contribute to an accident, including roadway conditions, sun glare, and pedestrian and driver inattentiveness.

Department of Traffic, Parking and Transportation Report

Sue Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, responded to concerns that the traffic-calming table at the corner of Oxford and Wendell Streets may have been a factor in the fatal accident. First, she explained that the department's approach to addressing problems involves receiving reports of vehicle or bike accidents from CPD, reviewing streets to uncover patterns, and then seeking programming and initiatives to deal with problem areas. She told the Council, "Currently, no distinct patterns jump out that are particularly surprising"

The traffic-calming tables in the Agassiz neighborhood are two of fourteen in the city. Ms. Clippinger reported that none of the raised intersections include traditional crosswalk markings, a feature she described as not specific to Cambridge. The Traffic Department believes that the tables have been successful in slowing traffic. In addition, the Department has added over 2000 marked crosswalks on city streets, over 260 were added in the last five years.

Residents' Concerns

Residents were invited to voice their concerns throughout the discussion. These included:

- Do the yield signs near the traffic-calming table add real value?
- Residents worry that some drivers seem to experience a few moments of inattention or distraction while concentrating on getting through the intersection.
- Special attention should be given to

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the crosswalk because Baldwin School students use it daily.

- The white diamonds painted at either side of the traffic-calming table are not a familiar symbol to Cambridge drivers.
- Many residents aren't aware that the entire raised intersection is considered a pedestrian zone.
- Some residents prefer that all crossings and crosswalks be uniform in appearance.
- A number of residents reported that they often see drivers fail to yield to pedestrians at that intersection.

Concluding the discussion, Ms. Clippinger summarized that many residents seemed concerned about driver yielding behaviors in the raised intersections. She told the Council, "We don't currently have enough information about yielding at the Wendell/Oxford intersection. We plan to expand our work to include it. As we consider changes in response to the issues raised by residents, we also need to have good before and after data. That way we'll know how a change will affect the intersection."

Lesley University Update

Bill Doncaster, Director of Community Relations at Lesley University, reported that the University's Board of Trustees has approved their campus plan. As mentioned at previous ANC meetings, the plan includes relocating the Art Institute of Boston (AIB) to Porter Square in a new building that will be constructed on the North Prospect Church site. The building will constitute 100,000 square feet, including 40 square feet below grade (underground) with art galleries and a library in the church building facing Mass. Ave.

Mr. Doncaster also briefly explained that the Lesley University Zoning Overlay District proposal, would:

- 1.) Extend the existing business district in Porter Square to include the new AIB property
- 2.) Create an overlay district that will

govern all of Lesley's properties in the square

"The way the zoning proposal was created really grew from conversations with neighbors, especially the Lesley/Neighborhood Working group that's been meeting for over two years. Through the overlay, Lesley is taking a long-range approach to Porter Campus," said Mr. Doncaster. "Right now, AIB is the only project in planning, but the zoning proposal was developed with an eye towards the future of all of Lesley's properties in Porter Square."

Mr. Doncaster added that the Working Group continues to meet, and is working on amendments to the zoning proposal on issues of open space and parking. Lesley plans to present the Centennial Plan, the AIB relocation plan and the zoning proposal at the February ANC meeting.

More information on Lesley's development projects in Porter Square can be found online at www.lesley.edu/portersquare.

ABC Community

AGASSIZ BALDWIN COMMUNITY THANKS 2008 END-OF-YEAR DONORS

Donors - Gifts of \$100 or More

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Susan White-Shaffer and Doug Shaffer

BECOME A DONOR!

Donations to Agassiz Baldwin Community provide valuable funds for many programs and services, including this newsletter. Donations also fund scholarships, community events, and mailings.

Tax deductible donations can be sent to:
Agassiz Baldwin Community, 20 Sacramento St., Cambridge, MA 02138.



**Agassiz Baldwin
Children's Programs**

13TH ANNUAL HIP HOP FESTIVAL

Agassiz Baldwin Community's Introducing Art Performance Series and Club Passim's Culture for Kids present a legendary event for school age children – the 13TH ANNUAL HIP HOP FESTIVAL, a showcase of hip hop dance and rap performed by local professional and youth dance groups.



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Master of Ceremonies Naheem Garcia will prep the crowd for returning favorites OrigNation, Jam'nastics, CAC Kids, Deborah Mason School of Dance and new to the roster this year, The Floorlords. During the show, audience members will learn about the four elements of hip hop: rapping, DJing, graffiti writing and break-dance.

General admission is \$2 per person and \$5 per family group. Afterschool programs free with RSVP; email Jacy Edelman, Program Director, at jedelman@agassiz.org. Email should include program name, number of students and number of adult chaperones

What: 13th Annual Hip Hop Festival
When: Thursday, February 19, 2:00 P.M.
Where: Baldwin School Stage,
Maria L. Baldwin School,
28 Sacramento Street

For more information, contact Jacy Edelman, Program Director, at (617) 349-6287 x11 or jedelman@agassiz.org.



MORE COOL HAPPENINGS AT AFTERSCHOOL

Prepared by Alice Vogler, 1-5 Site Director

Our first Game Friday happened on January 23rd thanks to our fabulous teachers down here in the 1st -5th Afterschool program!



The students were all put onto teams and the Afterschool Jeopardy game began. Everyone was attentive, worked great in their teams, and exhibited awesome sportsmanship.

Grace Hitchcock, who teaches the Kindergartners Tuesday through Thursday and works down here with us on Fridays, was the brain-child behind the game, but all the teachers and students were an essential part. The categories were: Teacher Trivia, Math, Science, Spelling & Grammar, and History. The game went on for an hour with out a hitch!

We hope to continue Game Fridays with the students and teachers each choosing their favorite. I have heard rumors of "Family Feud" and "The Price is Right" in the future. Let us know if you have any suggestions.

PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Prepared by Priscilla Browne, Preschool Lead Teacher

February's theme will focus on "Love and Friendship." We will create many projects using hearts for Valentine's Day. In addition, the children will help decorate our classroom for the holiday as well as decorate their own cupcake.



After Valentine's Day our focus will turn to Friendship. The children will make items for a classmate; we will also have some days where we turn the focus way from the actual project and focus on encouraging children to play with friends they do not normally interact with.

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REGISTER FOR OUTBACK SUMMER PROGRAM 2009

ABC staff is busy planning for the 2009 Outback Summer Program, and we look forward to including your child.

Beginning on June 29 and running through August 21, Outback '09 will keep children engaged and inspired by a variety of arts activities, as well as physical activities in our shady backyard. Outback is open to students entering first through six grades in September of 2009.

Tuition rates for the Outback '09 Summer program are as follows:

Regular Day - 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM
\$225.00 per week

Extended Day - 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM
\$281.00 per week

The registration fee is \$50 per family and 50% of tuition for registered weeks. Outback registration fills quickly, so we encourage families to send in their registration forms and deposits as soon as possible.

To learn more about the program and to download an application, visit our website at: www.agassiz.org/OutbackSummerProgram.asp.

For program questions, please email Jacy Edelman at jedelman@agassiz.org.

ENROLL FOR PRESCHOOL

Enroll for Sacramento Street Preschool, is a licensed preschool that provides a small, individualized, developmental program for 20 children ages 2 years 9 months to 4 years of age. It focuses on social and emotional growth of children both as individuals and as participants in a group. Children can attend full or half days two, three, or five days a week.

Sacramento Street Preschool has open-enrollment until all available slots have been filled. To

learn more, download enrollment forms or our Preschool brochure, visit www.agassiz.org/SacramentoStPreschool.asp.

You may also contact Preschool Site-Director Jessica Simons with questions at (617) 349-6287 x14 or jsimons@agassiz.org.

AFTERSCHOOL WISH LIST

Agassiz Afterschool is looking for donations of:

- Any medium to large sized jars that could be used as vases
- Any kind of cooking magazines or photos of food
- Straight and circular knitting needles
- Small and large cardboard tubes (including toilet paper tubes)
- Tiny cardboard boxes (jewelry size)
- Clear molded plastic of any size (for example, the plastic surrounding a new package of batteries)
- Unusual molded cardboard or styro-foam
- Anything neat that could be used for architectural modeling

Donations may be dropped off at 20 Sacramento Street on the second floor. Call (617) 349-6287 or email jedelman@agassiz.org for more info.

City Wide

6TH ANNUAL SUMMER RESOURCE / CAMP INFORMATION NIGHT

Come meet the representatives for Cambridge Community School camps and other private and public camps, including programs for children with disabilities.

- Camp programs for youth (Grades K - 8)
- Day and Residential Camps
- Programs especially for preteens
- Job opportunities for teens
- Entertainment for children and refreshments

Parking is available in the school garage. For additional information, call Roslyn Shoy at (617) 349-6227.

Date: Wednesday, February 25
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
Location: Cambridge Rindge & Latin High School, Main Cafeteria
Snow Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2009

SNOW EMERGENCY PARKING TEXT ALERTS

Prepared by the Cambridge Public Information Office

The Cambridge E-Line Newsletter service now enables current and new subscribers to receive text alerts to a phone when the city declares a snow emergency. This new feature is especially helpful to people who live or work in Cambridge and may be impacted by a snow emergency parking ban.

The City of Cambridge will be declaring a snow emergency for most snowstorms in order to clear the streets effectively. A snow emergency means that parking is banned on the signed streets and cars will be towed. A Snow emergency tow and ticket is \$150 if you pick up your car right away.

Sign up for Cambridge E-Line and/or text alerts by visiting www.cambridgema.gov and clicking on the E-Line link at the top right.

For more snow related information, such as parking during a ban or property owner respon-

sibilities related to clearing snow and ice from sidewalks, visit the Traffic Department Website, www.cambridgema.gov/traffic and the Department of Public Works (DPW) Website, www.cambridgema.gov/TheWorks/services/snow.html.



Sacramento Street Gallery

“MOSTLY DRAWING”

Sacramento Street Gallery proudly presents “Mostly Drawing” by long-time Cambridge resident and artist Nancy Webb. The artist says about her work, “My drawings are of objects that are discarded, leftover, abandoned . . . beach debris, things from the compost heap, or simply detritus found on sidewalks or city streets. In drawing them I try to give them a new order of life. With my sculptures I have never lost the object. But I hope I have transformed them into new and evocative forms.”

The resulting drawings are lush and beautiful, and will be a treat to the observer.

Please join us for an opening reception on **Friday, February 13th** from 5:00-7:00 PM. Light refreshments will be served. The show runs through **Friday, March 20**.

Gallery hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.



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Community Calendar

February 2009

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------|---|
| Wednesday, February 11 | 6:00 - 7:30 PM | ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St, 2nd Floor Public welcome |
| Friday, February 13 | 5:30 - 7:30 PM | "Mostly Drawing" opens at Sacramento St. Gallery 20 Sacramento St, 1st Floor |
| Monday, February 16 | | President's Day Holiday ABC School Programs and Office closed |
| Thursday, February 19 | 2:00 PM | 13th Annual Hip Hop Festival Baldwin School Stage, 28 Sacramento St. |
| Wednesday, February 25 | 7:30 - 9:00 PM | ANC Monthly Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Baldwin School Cafeteria, 28 Sacramento St. All are welcome |

The Whistler is published monthly September - June by the Agassiz Baldwin Community, distribution 2,000. Call (617) 349-6287 to receive by mail or email. The newsletter is also posted each month online at www.agassiz.org. Items of interest to the neighborhood may be submitted for consideration no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication date.

THE WHISTLER FEBRUARY 2009



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