

# the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

April/May 2019

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## ANC

### EDITOR'S NOTE

Please find minutes from community meetings, March through May 2019, in chronological order. Information from the April 18th meeting, Putting the Affordable Housing Overlay District and Real Estate Transfer Tax Proposals in Context, co-organized by ANC, Porter Square Neighbors Association, and the Association of Cambridge Neighborhoods, will be forthcoming in a future edition of *The Whistler*.

*The Whistler* newsletter team appreciates everyone who helped organize community efforts, attended meetings, and lent your voice or expertise.

Thank you,  
Phoebe Sinclair, Community Liaison  
Jessica Leach, ANC Scribe

## NOTES FROM MARCH 12 MEETING

### Development in the Neighborhood

On March 12th, Agassiz Neighborhood Council convened for its monthly meeting to discuss the ongoing project at 74 Oxford Street. Lynne Reiss, an abutter to the site, was particularly concerned with the proposed driveway and parking, which she explained would impair the critical root areas of three trees located between her home and 74 Oxford.

To avoid damaging the trees, Ms. Reiss suggested that developer William Senné make the parking spaces in front of the building compact instead of full-sized.

"It would also make it look less like a parking lot," she added.

## NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



**May 14, 7:30 PM**

Maud Morgan Arts,  
20A Sacramento Street

*This year, we'll be hosting a regular meeting before the Council votes to approve the Board of Directors Slate for 2019. Following, please join us for a reception with light refreshments.*

### AGENDA

- Retail Cannabis Establishment Presentation with Halani, Inc. for 1686 Mass. Ave.
- Sacramento Field Updates
  - Decompaction work to improve drainage
  - Upcoming community discussion of proposed off-leash dog hours

Currently, Mr. Senné's plans include four apartment units, three parking spaces in front of the building, and one in the rear. To fit four large units, the building would need to be expanded, bringing it closer to the property line shared by Ms. Reiss.

Attendees also discussed the possibility of asking the developer to again consider an originally proposed nine-unit plan, which would make no changes to the building's size. One of the concerns for the increased size is that the window wells from the basement unit might pose a risk to the trees as well.

"We're renegeing on our [original] ask by asking him to get rid of the window well," said Agassiz resident Toby Hyde, referring to an earlier ANC Special Meeting on November 26, 2018 where support for the four-unit plan was decided by vote. "We had an agreement, and we are now changing the terms."

Ms. Reiss also pointed out that the abutters of 74 Oxford Street originally supported the four-unit plan. After some back and forth on what neighbors wished to see from the developer, ANC prepared the following statement:

"The neighborhood continues to support the four unit solution, but we require no material impact on tree roots on either side of the building caused by expansion of the building window wells and parking, and we encourage the Board to allow compact spaces and re-establish a curved driveway such that it bypasses a critical root zone of the Bradford Pears to achieve these goals."

11 attendees voted in favor of this statement,



while 4 abstained from voting. Moderator Fred Meyer did not participate in the vote. The Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeal discussed 74 Oxford Street at its April 11th meeting.

### **NOTES FROM APRIL 3 SPECIAL MEETING**

#### **74 Oxford Street Update**

After months of community discussions and several meetings focused specifically on construction at 74 Oxford Street, developer William Senné joined the Agassiz Neighborhood Council in person on April 3rd.

Introducing himself to ANC, Senné explained that he had completed several projects in the area and works exclusively in Cambridge. He purchased 74 Oxford hoping to renovate it entirely and convert it into smaller units. However, with community input, plans evolved to maintain the building's original exterior with four large units within, instead of smaller units.

In its current iteration, the plan includes an addition on the left side, which requires relief from the Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals. At the time of the April 3rd meeting, the Historical Commission had voted to support Senné's BZA application.

"In essence, very little [about our plan] has changed since the last appearance at an ANC meeting," said Stephen Hiserodt, the project's architect. "There were some concerns about the parking arrangement."

Lynne Reiss, a direct abutter of 74 Oxford Street, had previously raised concerns about three trees on the property line. She requested that the planned parking spaces either be made compact or for the driveway to curve to avoid the trees' critical root areas.

"We've tried to squeeze it as far as we could off the property line to avoid those trees," Mr. Hiserodt added.

Fred Meyer, ANC moderator, asked whether they could designate one of the four parking spaces for compact-sized cars to help keep the pavement away from critical root areas, but Mr. Hiserodt pointed out that, unless there are more than four spaces, compact designation isn't permitted.

Many neighbors wanted to know more about Mr. Senné's plans to protect and preserve the trees. Recently, an arborist assessed possible risk to the trees, and Mr. Hiserodt reported that the opinion was that "they'll be easy to protect."

"All of the other features do have a significant impact on us, but all of those things are manageable if the tree cover is still there to supply privacy," said one abutter from 47 Wendell Street.

Andrew Jankowich, also of 47 Wendell, asked if Mr. Senné would consider establishing an escrow fund for replacement landscaping in the event of something happening to the trees.

"I can't see myself agreeing to something like that," Mr. Senné said. "It's just too involved."

This response led others to question who would then be responsible for any trees damaged during construction. The worry was that the onus would fall on future homeowners at 74 Oxford.

While the trees on the property line were a major topic of discussion, there was an emphasis on coming to a consensus on whether to support Mr. Senné's application to BZA.

"I'm worried we're going to lose the opportunity for a pretty good project if we don't support it," said Karen Engels, an abutter. "We started with a terrible project, and we've seen those get built, and I don't want to see another one . . . I feel like that's the danger of not coming to consensus at this moment."

Mr. Meyer proposed the following motion, which attendees unanimously voted to support:

"The Agassiz Neighborhood Council supports the variance and special permit applications for a 4-unit project pending before the City's Board of Zoning Appeals."

#### **Q&A**

**Q:** On the printed plans, it says "existing trees likely to be impacted." If they're not going to be impacted, why [is it written that] they will be?

**A:** Mr. Hiserodt: There's going to be a lot of activity, but when you're on a job site, you try to protect the trees as much as you can.

**Q:** How can you guarantee to protect the trees after construction of that property?

**A:** Mr. Senné: When we go to excavate, there is no guarantee that those trees will survive anything. The impact on trees that large . . . it's very unlikely that they will die or fall over. We can get the arborist to put that in writing so you can feel as good as possible about it.

**Q:** Why are the parking spaces staggered and not flush with the sidewalk?

**A:** Mr. Hiserodt: Cambridge requires backup space of 22 feet behind parking spaces. It's illegal to park in those backup spaces.

**Q:** The present driveway has a curve, why isn't there a curve in the proposed driveway?

**A:** Mr. Hiserodt: We cannot legally put our parking spaces there with the configuration of the current driveway.

**Q:** Will the building be refinished like the similar building on Walker St.?

**A:** Mr. Senné: Yes. [74 Oxford] will look like a brand new version of the Walker St. building. We've had countless meetings with Charlie Sullivan [of the Cambridge Historical Commission] and every modification we've discussed here we've also discussed with the historical commission.

**Q:** Have you considered parking underneath the building?

**A:** Mr. Senné: As a matter of fact, the very first idea for the property involved a garage underneath with an entrance off of Wendell. It's a very big, expensive project. Not everybody loves it and that most definitely kills all the trees. We considered it, but it didn't make sense for this project.

**Q:** Why didn't you ask for a variance on a bigger curb cut?"

**A:** Mr. Senné: There's an electrical transformer there.  
Mr. Hiserodt: It's also a City Council process to alter the curb cut.

**Q:** Will there be any lighting that will impact the neighbors?"

**A:** Mr. Senné: We haven't designed any lighting yet. Typically, there will be lighting around the entrances but there are ordinances that say how much that light can spread out around the house.



## Community

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### 2019 BOARD SLATE

Below please find the Slate of Officers and Directors for the Agassiz Baldwin Community Board of Directors. This Slate will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 14th.

Officers for a one-year term:

Sue Kriegsmann, Co-chair, Crescent St.  
Andrea Walsh, Co-chair, Eustis St.  
Hull Fulweiler, Clerk, Howland St.  
Jonathan Lehrich, Treasurer, Cogswell Ave.

Board Directors for a two-year term:

Hull Fulweiler, Howland St.  
Sue Kriegsmann, Crescent St.  
Jonathan Lehrich, Cogswell Ave.  
Wendy Prellwitz, Wendell St.  
Lawrence Neeley, Eustis St.  
Ellen Harkavy, Lancaster St.

Thank you to this year's Nominating Committee: Joel Bard, Terry DeLancey, George Hein, and Joan Squeri.

### BALDWIN BLOOMS 2019

Baldwin Blooms is the Friends of Baldwin's annual party and fundraiser. All grown-ups in the Baldwin community are invited!

**When:** Saturday, May 18,  
5:30-9:30 PM  
**Where:** Maud Morgan Arts Center,  
20A Sacramento St., Cambridge  
**Tickets:** \$20 (includes dinner and drinks),  
and register for silent auction:  
[http://bit.ly/baldwin\\_blooms\\_2019](http://bit.ly/baldwin_blooms_2019)

The night will feature a silent auction and raffle. Tickets are just \$20 and include dinner (food from Tenoch Mexican, Manoa, Tex Mex Eats, Hi-Rise, and Forge bakery) and drinks (open bar with wine, beer, and Bantam cider).

All auction bidding will be done online, so you'll need to set up an account to buy your tickets and bid at the auction. Don't worry--it takes only a few minutes!

Visit: [http://bit.ly/baldwin\\_blooms\\_2019](http://bit.ly/baldwin_blooms_2019)

### COMMUNITY DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG HOURS AT SACRAMENTO FIELD

Based on community interest, the City of Cambridge is exploring a pilot program to allow dogs to be off-leash in Sacramento Field during designated hours. Join the City to provide feedback on a proposed pilot program.

**When:** Wednesday, May 22,  
7:00-8:30 PM  
**Where:** Baldwin School Cafeteria,  
85 Oxford St.

For more information about the City's approach to off-leash dogs in parks, visit:  
<http://www.cambridgema.gov/offleash>

Interested persons can also contact Daniel Wolf, Neighborhood Planner with Cambridge Community Development Department, (617) 349-4618 or [dwolf@cambridgema.gov](mailto:dwolf@cambridgema.gov)

### **SAVE THE DATE: BACKYARD BLOCK PARTY**

Come celebrate our community and the arts at our 9th annual Backyard Block Party -FREE!

**What:** Backyard Block Party  
**When:** Sunday, June 2nd,  
12:00-4:00 PM  
**Where:** 20 Sacramento St., backyard

Enjoy:

- City Animals art workshop for all ages
- Giant bubbles and giant lawn games
- Tai chi and yoga demos
- Performances
- Multi-Generation Clothing Swap 'n Grab sponsored by Living Well Network
- Temporary tattoos
- Balloons
- Pop up portrait studio
- Imagination Playground big, blue blocks
- Places to sit and relax
- Snacks
- And MORE!

### **Temporary Tattoo Contest**

As part of the Backyard Block Party, young people and adults alike are encouraged to submit designs to our 3rd annual temporary tattoo contest. Winning designs are chosen via a community vote and the tattoos debut at the Block Party (\$1 per tattoo). Creators of winning designs will also receive a small prize.

#### **Guidelines:**

1. Each person may submit 1 design.

2. Designs should be between 1 inch and 3 inches on all sides.
3. Light colors like yellow will not show up well on skin, so use bright colors like red, and dark colors like black and purple. If you use a light color, try outlining it in black.
4. Keep the theme of your design kid appropriate, please. ABC staff reserve the right to exclude designs that are deemed inappropriate for children.
5. Email your completed designs to [mwoods@agassiz.org](mailto:mwoods@agassiz.org) by 5:30 PM by **Wednesday, May 15, 2019**.

#### **Three Winners**

Voting will take place 5/16-5/21

- Kid's pick- chosen by students in ABC and MMA programs
- Community pick- chosen by community members
- Staff pick- chosen by ABC and MMA staff and faculty

Learn more by downloading the guidelines PDF:  
<http://bit.ly/bybp-tattoo-contest-2019>

#### **Photos**

Check out photos from last year's Backyard Block Party: [http://bit.ly/bybp\\_photos\\_2018](http://bit.ly/bybp_photos_2018)



### **WHISTLER ARCHIVES: OUTBACK**

Weather-wise, summer still feels far away, but we're already prepping for another year of Outback. Each summer, teachers and staff are inevitably asked the same question: "Where does

the name Outback come from?” Fortunately, we have the answer documented in our *Whistler* archives.

From the May 1980 issue: “In previous years, our summer day camp was held in the nearby 5-acre tract of woods, known as the Sachs Estate, owned by Harvard. Since the American Academy of Arts and Sciences began construction of its office building in the center of this space last year at this time, we were forced to move the camp to the backyard behind the Community Center and to reduce the size of the camp. Construction is still underway, so it looks like we will be based “out back” again this year.”

In the next issue, the program was officially referred to as “Outback.” The same issue also hinted at origins of another ongoing summer tradition: weekly beach trips.

“Field trips for 4th-8th graders. Every Tuesday from July 8 through August 12, we will take up to 8 kids on day-long trips to local beaches.”

These days, we’re taking over 100 Outbackers to the beach every week!

### **About the Archive**

The Whistler Archive is an ongoing project conducted by ANC Scribe Jessica Leach to document Agassiz’s history as told by this newsletter. We plan to reprint the highlights in upcoming issues. If you have any suggestions or curiosities, please send them to [press@agassiz.org](mailto:press@agassiz.org).



*Outback beach trip, year unknown*



## **Living Well Network**

### **SPRING SPEAKERS SERIES**

The Living Well Network spring Speakers Series on health best practices and advocacy continues. Join us for How to Be Your Own Best Advocate. Learn how to be an active and knowledgeable participant in your own care. This is fourth in five-part series. We welcome all adults to this informative and interesting presentation with Ailene Gerhardt, Independent Board Certified Patient Advocate.

- When:** Wednesday, May 22,  
5:15-6:15 PM
- Where:** ANC Community Room,  
basement level of North Hall,  
1651 Mass. Ave.
- Tickets:** LWN Members FREE,  
nonmembers \$5, RSVP required,  
contact: [dmartin@agassiz.org](mailto:dmartin@agassiz.org)



## **Maud Morgan Arts**

### **CALL FOR WORK: POSTCARDS TO FAY**

Send us a postcard! An expansive artist postcard show to benefit the Chandler Gallery and Maud Morgan Arts.

- Deadline:** All postcards must arrive at Chandler Gallery by July 10, 2019
- Mail to:** Chandler Gallery, 20 Sacramento Street, Cambridge, MA 02138
- Show dates:** July 29–August 16, 2019
- Fee:** Free to participate

Artists are asked to create work that is 6×8 inches. All work will be sold at \$50 with 50% to go to the artist and 50% to benefit Chandler Gallery and Maud Morgan Arts Center. Artists can submit up

to 4 cards. The card can be sent in an envelope or mailed directly. Please use heavier paper if choosing to mail. Unsold cards will be held for 30 days for pick up by the artist or a representative.

Participating artists, please include the following information with your card:

- Name of the artist
- Contact information: email, phone number, mailing address
- Medium used to create the card

### **Reception**

Join us on **Thursday, August 1** for a reception at Chandler Gallery and a fun filled event in the backyard –Arts N’ Craft BREWS!

Food, local brews, affordable art, yard games and Live Music! More information coming soon!

## **City Wide**

### **NEW LESLEY UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT**

Excerpted from Lesley University

Following a nationwide search, Lesley University has selected Janet L. Steinmayer as the university's seventh president. Steinmayer, currently president of Mitchell College in New London, Conn., begins her term at Lesley this July and will succeed interim president Richard S. Hansen.



. . . Steinmayer has a longstanding commitment to and passion for Lesley that includes a decade of service on its Board of Trustees. Her son is an alumnus of Lesley's Threshold Program, which gives her firsthand knowledge of the university from a parent's perspective. Steinmayer's higher education experience also includes 15 years on the board of Bryn Mawr College, her alma mater, where she currently serves as vice chair, and service on the Board of Visitors of the John

F. Welch School of Business at Sacred Heart University.

"It is both a personal honor and a tremendous professional opportunity being selected to serve as Lesley University's seventh president," said Steinmayer. "Knowing Lesley's history of educating and supporting creative and skilled leaders in education, human services and the arts, and embracing the changes and challenges in higher education, I clearly see Lesley's path to being a driving force of change."

Learn more: [http://bit.ly/lesley\\_president](http://bit.ly/lesley_president)

### **COMMUNITY MEETINGS FOR CANNABIS/MARIJUANA RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS**

Public meetings are ongoing for a growing number of retail cannabis stores seeking special permits to operate within Cambridge. This is an opportunity to hear about plans, give feedback, and have your comments and concerns heard by applicant business owners.

Here is a full listing of upcoming special permit pre-application community meetings:  
<http://bit.ly/pre-app-community-mtgs-cannabis>

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING MONTH OF ACTION**

Throughout the month of May, the City will join Cambridge Housing Authority, Homeowner's Rehab, Inc., Just-A-Start, and other local organizations in hosting events, information sessions, and community conversations that bring awareness to Cambridge's affordable housing programs, initiatives, and milestones.

The Affordable Housing Month of Action will culminate in a celebration of the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust's 30th anniversary.

Learn more:  
<http://bit.ly/cambma-affordable-housing-month>

# Community Calendar

## April/May 2019

Wednesday, May 8	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St., 2nd Floor Public welcome
Tuesday, May 14	7:30-9:00 PM	Annual Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento St., 2D Studio All are welcome, please join us
Saturday, May 18	5:30-9:30 PM	Baldwin Blooms, 20A Sacramento St., Cambridge Tickets \$20, learn more: <a href="http://bit.ly/baldwin_blooms_2019">http://bit.ly/baldwin_blooms_2019</a>
Wednesday, May 22	5:15-6:15 PM	Spring Speaker Series, ANC Community Room, 1651 Mass. Ave., learn more on page 6
Wednesday, May 22	7:00-8:30 PM	Community Discussion of Proposed Off-Leash Dog Hours at Sacramento Field, Baldwin School Cafeteria, 85 Oxford St., learn more on page 4

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](http://www.agassiz.org). Items of interest to the neighborhood should be submitted for consideration no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication date.

## The Whistler April/May 2019



Agassiz Neighborhood Council  
20 Sacramento Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
P: (617) 349-6287 F: (617) 497-4388  
[www.agassiz.org](http://www.agassiz.org), [www.maudmorganarts.org](http://www.maudmorganarts.org)

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