WHEREAS: On April 8, 2019, the City Council passed a policy order asking the City Manager to direct City staff to compile a full accounting of streets, schools, and public buildings that may be named in honor of those who have ties to the American slave trade with a view toward renaming these; and

WHEREAS: The intent behind this endeavor was and is not to erase the sometimes complicated history of our city—certainly, we must acknowledge that even some of our country’s most celebrated historical figures engaged in acts that would surely earn them condemnation in contemporary society—but to force us to more honestly confront our history and the questions of whom we choose to celebrate, how we understand the fullness of their lives and their actions, and whether there are other, lesser-known but no-less-important figures we ought to be lifting up and celebrating in the ongoing desire to more fully understand our city’s history; and

WHEREAS: On June 10, 2019, the City Council passed a related policy order asking the City Manager to establish a working committee to review the monuments, memorials, and markers throughout Cambridge to determine whether any of these commemorate those who were linked to the slave trade or engaged in other similarly shameful acts, to determine which individuals—particularly women, people of color, and those from other historically marginalized communities—should be newly recognized with a monument, memorial, or marker; and

WHEREAS: Related to this larger, ongoing discussion, a meeting of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council on January 14, 2020 featured a discussion amongst neighborhood residents who feel that the time has come for this neighborhood to be renamed from one that honors Louis Agassiz—whose work has been used by white supremacists since the 1800s to justify their shameful and misguided positions—to one that honors someone the neighborhood can be rightfully proud of, such as Maria L. Baldwin or another lesser-known light from our city’s rich past; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the appropriate City staff to work with the residents of the Agassiz neighborhood in furthering this important neighborhood conversation and in helping make a determination as to how to arrive at an appropriate, official name change for this neighborhood; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to the City Council on this matter in a timely manner.