

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

May 2010

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ANC News

NOTES FROM THE APR. 14 MEETING

Revised Plans for Art Institute of Boston

Lesley University and Bruner/Cott Associates presented revised plans for the Art Institute of Boston (AIB) in Porter Square. Those in attendance included Marylou Batt, Vice President for Administration; George Smith, Director of Operations; and Will Suter, Campus Planner, all of Lesley University, as well as architect Simeon Bruner of Bruner/Cott Associates.

Following last spring's approval of a zoning change in Porter square, Lesley staff spent nine months reviewing AIB's program and incorporating community members' input from various meetings and hearings. In June, Lesley will appear before the Cambridge Historical Commission.

The presentation also included scale models of

the plans, showing the development's relationship to adjacent buildings.

Buildings, Old and New

During his presentation, Mr. Bruner explained that the church, relocated to Porter from Harvard Square in the early 1900s, will be a focal point for the new AIB. The church will be restored, moved south on the lot, lowered to its original orientation to the ground, and will house a library. A new four-story building on the corner of Mass. Ave. and Roseland will link to the church via a two-story building at the rear of the site. A glass "connector" building and courtyard in front will welcome students and visitors to the school.

The new plans incorporate increased set backs and reduced square footage from previous concepts. AIB will comprise 75,000 square feet: 14,000 in the church, 35,000 above ground, and 26,000 below ground in the new construction. Since original conception, Lesley reduced the mass of the new AIB by 20,000 square feet. They've also worked to increase open space on the site, including the courtyard.

In describing the relationship of the church and new building, Simeon Bruner said Bruner/Cott seeks to "create a dialogue between the old and

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



MAY 19 - 7:30 PM

Maria L. Baldwin School Cafeteria
28 Sacramento Street
(Please use Oxford St. entrance)

AGENDA

Annual Meeting: The Council will vote to approve the slate for the 2010/2011 Board of Directors. All are invited to attend, meet the Board, and enjoy light refreshments.

new in a way that is meaningful” using color, materials (including contemporary brick reminiscent of nearby University Hall), and windows that relate to neighboring buildings on Mass. Ave. Lesley is also working out where to place the mechanicals to make them less visible, and intends to incorporate a “white roof” and “green roof” to lessen AIB’s environmental impact. Currently, Lesley is in the process of hiring a landscape architect.

Residents’ Concerns

Two residents, both involved in an appeal of the zoning change, reported feeling that the renderings of the proposed buildings were misleading in that the new design did not actually decrease the mass as indicated. One attendee stated, “These slides showed a limited perspective, excluding many new windows, noise, and lights that don’t exist now.”

Q: Why move the church?

A: The scale of the church better matches the smaller buildings to AIB’s south on Mass. Ave. Otherwise, the church would look “sandwiched” between University Hall and the four-story AIB building. Also, moving the church allows Lesley to create more usable space within it.

Q: What program needs did you compromise to reduce the size of the art school’s buildings?

A: There’s been no compromise to the program, which includes spaces for art instruction, art making, and public display. Some elements of AIB will be housed in University Hall.

Q: What will AIB offer the greater community?

A: Reflecting AIB’s mission to prepare tomorrow’s artists and share arts-related programming with the community at large, the art school will house art galleries and an art library open to the public; host a year-round series of speakers, symposia, and other arts-related programming.

Q: Are there any new plans for University Hall, particularly related to the ground floor retail?

A: Elements of AIB will be included in University Hall, with other University functions moved elsewhere among the three campuses. There are no plans to reduce retail on the first floor.

Q: Will there be changes to the parking lot?

A: Although the parking lot itself won’t change, Lesley has committed to landscaping and creating a small park area along Roseland St. for university and public use as part of the AIB design.

Contact Information

Questions and concerns can be directed to Lesley University via email at: portersquare@lesley.edu. Also, learn more on line by reading past editions of the Whistler newsletter at www.agassiz.org or by visiting Lesley University’s Porter Square development page at: www.lesley.edu/portersquare.

Harvard University Updates

Tom Lucey, Director of Community Relations at Harvard University, and Mary Power, Senior Director of Community Relations, reported on several ongoing and upcoming projects in the Agassiz Neighborhood.

Harvard Law School Construction

The construction of a Harvard Law School building at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Everett St. remains on schedule, with the underground garage scheduled to open September 2010. The new building will open in winter 2012.

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Updating the Mass. Ave./Everett Intersection

Consistent with the special permit granted by the Cambridge Planning Board, Harvard plans to convert part of Everett Street to a two-way to prevent garage-related traffic from entering the neighborhood. They will also install new traffic lights and sidewalks. The work should be completed by mid-June, weather permitting.

Ground Water Remediation

Harvard is working to remediate dry cleaning solvents that leaked into the ground water (not drinking water) beneath the "Bence Pharmacy" building at Mass. Ave. and Everett Street. This site hosted a dry cleaning service for approximately fifty years.

Harvard's investigation of the subsurface conditions has been completed and remediation efforts have started. The remediation work involves using food-grade vegetable oil and natural bacteria to degrade the chemical. The process requires repeated treatments and testing.

The Bence Pharmacy building is being used as a staging area as the contractor works in the public way and beneath its foundation. In June, they will excavate behind the building to remove contamination from under a portion of the parking lot. Harvard expects the project to take at least a year to complete.

Harvard reiterated that they are aware that the community strongly prefers retail, particularly small, independent businesses, at the site. They are also aware that neighbors believe it is important to keep the site lively while empty and will enliven the storefront windows with posters from Harvard's art museums and the American Repertory Theater.

Residents are welcome to view the information repositories being held at 20 Sacramento Street and at Harvard University. Contact Phoebe Sinclair, Community Liaison, at (617) 349-6287 x10 or psinclair@agassiz.org for more information.

Skylights on Grounds of Northwest Science Building

Mr. Lucey reported that work would soon begin in the garage beneath the Northwest Science Building on Hammond Street to convert the upper level into usable space (a carpentry shop). They plan to install skylights that will be flush with the ground and explained that, although the skylights might emit a small amount of light in the winter months when plants die back, they shouldn't be otherwise noticeable.

Fire Command Center Landscaping

Although twenty trees were planted to shield the Fire Command Center on Hammond Street (and egress belonging to the Northwest Science Building garage) from public view, Harvard has experienced problems with the soil in the area. Work to improve the soil and drainage will begin mid-May, and Harvard will replace the trees that have died.

Harvard University in the Community

To learn about Harvard University events and opportunities (many free) available to the public, visit www.community.harvard.edu.

View Plans For Construction/Improvements on Your Street

Residents of Prentiss, North Oxford, and South Frost Streets are invited to view construction plans for improvements to sewer and water lines along their streets as part of a citywide project. The work is being contracted through the Cambridge Department of Public Works (DPW), and will include:

- Upgraded sewer, storm drain, and



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- water utilities
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Copies of plans are available in the Community Liaison's office at 20 Sacramento Street, and also online at: www.cambridgema.gov/TheWorks/projects/PrentissStreet.htm.

ABC Board Report

George Hein, Board Director, stated "ABC's various programs are running wonderfully, smoothly, and on budget. Enrollment in Agassiz Baldwin Children's Programs is holding up or increasing, which is good in this economy!"

The board has been concentrating on plans for the Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center. Despite the earlier delay in securing permits, construction is expected to be completed this spring and the art center open for use by Outback Summer Program. Currently, the outside of the art center is being painted and site work is about to begin.

Hard Hat Tours

As part of Cambridge Open Studios, ABC will be offering guided tours of the art center from 12 Noon to 6 PM on Saturday, April 24 and Sunday, April 25. Please drop by for a tour and light refreshments.

Grand Opening

Save the date for the Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center's grand opening on Wednesday, October 6, 2010.

2010/11 Slate for ABC's Board of Directors

Mr. Hein announced the 2010/11 Board Slate, as nominated by the ABC Nominating Committee. Four actively serving directors up for re-election are:

- Co-chairs Miriam Goldberg and Andrea

Walsh (one-year terms)

- Anna Eckert Byrne, Parent Representative (two-year term)
- Fred Meyer (two-year term)

Also nominated:

- Adrienne Bailey of Cambridge Trust Company, to serve as a community representative (two-year term)

The slate will be presented at the annual meeting, Wednesday, May 19, and elected by a vote of the council. Read more about the annual meeting on page 5 of *The Whistler*.

Although this year's slate has already been established, persons interested in serving may submit a resume for consideration the next time there is an open position on the Board.

Introducing City Councillor Leland Cheung

Leland Cheung, new to Cambridge City Council, is the youngest member and the first elected Asian American. In addition to serving on the council, he is pursuing a dual degree MBA/MPA program at MIT Sloan School of Management and Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Councillor Cheung invited residents to contact him regarding any issues or concerns, stating, "I'm more than happy to listen." He can be reached at LCheung@cambridgema.gov or (617) 349-4280.

Fred Meyer, Realtor

88 Hammond Street, (617) 876-1200

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Community

ATTEND OUR ANNUAL MEETING

Please join us Wednesday, May 19, for our annual meeting; a once-a-year celebration and social event dedicated to reaching out to one another in a friendly way to begin a successful new year. Everyone is welcome to attend, meet the board, and enjoy light refreshments.

The council will vote to approve the slate (below) for the 2010/2011 Board of Directors.

Officers for a one-year term:
Andrea Walsh, Co-Chair
Miriam Goldberg, Co-Chair

Directors for a two-year term:
Fred Meyer, Hammond Street
Anna Eckert Bryne, Kirkland Street
Adrienne Bailey, Cambridge Trust Company

What: Annual meeting
When: Wednesday, May 19, 7:30 PM
Where: Maria L. Baldwin School Cafeteria, 28 Sacramento Street, Cambridge

MMVAC CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Construction for the Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center (MMVAC) is moving at a fast clip! The

exterior work is nearly finished and painting will be completed by the end of April, weather permitting. Electrical and plumbing systems have been installed and interior walls will soon be in place. Keep your eyes open for the new weathervane, designed by artist David Phillips, that will soon grace the restored cupola.

Please enjoy the following photos.



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Agassiz Baldwin Children's Programs

INTRODUCING ART PRESENTS MAGNOLIA

ABC Introducing Art and Club Passim Culture for Kids present Magnolia, "New England's hometown Cajun band." With accordion, fiddle, guitar, and triangle, the irresistible rhythms will get your toes tapping and your spirits smiling!



Hear the Cajun French vocals of the energetic two steps and soulful waltzes while finding out about the culture and music of one of America's rich traditions.

We hope you can join us!

When: Wednesday, May 12, 2 PM
Where: Maria L. Baldwin School Stage,
28 Sacramento Street
Tickets: \$2 per person, \$5 per family,

afterschool groups free with
RSVP, call (617) 349-6287

**SECOND ANNUAL AGASSIZ BALDWIN
AFTERSCHOOL COMMUNITY
ART SHOW**

Prepared by Alice Vogler, 1-5 Site Director

Agassiz Baldwin Community and Harvard University's Arthur M. Sackler Museum have combined forces to expand art education throughout the community. This is the foundation for the 2010 art exhibition in the Sacramento Street Gallery, which will include artwork from Agassiz Baldwin Afterschool, several surrounding afterschool programs, and the Maria L. Baldwin School.



Ten chosen artworks from the Sackler's collection have been the inspiration for this exhibition. From these chosen artworks an elementary art-making guide has been provided and given to teachers in the programs featured in our show.

The student's artwork on display will support the notion that the Sackler's historic art collection continues to inspire and communicate to current and future generations.

Please join us for our opening and closing receptions for parents, students, and teachers at the Sacramento St. Gallery and the Sackler Art Museum.

What: Opening reception
When: Monday, June 14th
Where: Arthur M. Sackler Museum
485 Broadway, Cambridge

What: Closing reception
When: Monday, June 21st
Where: Sacramento Street Gallery,
20 Sacramento St., Cambridge

City Wide

**FAMILIES FIRST PARENTING
PROGRAMS AT O'NEILL BRANCH
LIBRARY**

Two free programs will be offered for parents and child care professionals around the topics of temperament and difficult behaviors.

Registration is required and child care will be provided, but is limited. Refreshments will be served.

What: Temperament and Your Child
When: May 12, 6:30 to 7:45 PM

What: Fighting and Biting
When: May 19, 6:30-7:45 PM

Where: 70 Rindge Ave. Cambridge.
Contact: (617) 349-4409, (617) 349-4023

These workshops are sponsored by the Early Childhood Resource Center of the Cambridge Public Library and the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.



Sacramento Street Gallery

"GLACIER" BY DIANE CHARYK NORRIS

Don't miss "Glacier," paintings by Diane Charyk Norris on display at the Sacramento Street Gallery through Friday, May 21, 2010.

Gallery Hours:
Weekdays 10:00 AM-
5:00 PM



Grinnell and the Salamander

Community Calendar

May 2010

Wednesday, May 12	2:00 PM	Introducing Art and Culture for Kids present Magnolia Baldwin School Stage, 28 Sacramento Street
Wednesday, May 12	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St., 2nd Floor Public welcome
Wednesday, May 19	7:30-9:00 PM	Annual Meeting Maria L. Baldwin School Cafeteria, 28 Sacramento St. Everyone is invited!
Monday, May 31		Memorial Day Holiday, ABC School Programs and Office closed

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 May 2010



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