

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

January 2020

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Friel, who also owns the Union Square, Somerville wine bar Rebel Rebel, attended the January 14th Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting. Absent from the meeting were her partners Andrew Brady and Sara Markey, who are co-owners of Union Square's Field & Vine and also husband and wife.

"What we're hoping to open is a wine bar and community space," she told ANC in her introduction. "What we've done at Rebel Rebel is become a community activism space for the neighborhood . . . we're designing [Dear Annie] to do that even more."

To turn this vision into reality, the restaurant is designed with two sections and inspired by "old school pubs," as Ms. Friel explained, which means a place where people can "come together to share ideas and information."

The front section will serve the public seven days a week with a selection of natural wines, specializing in small production farmers both locally and abroad, and a pescetarian food menu, created by Chef and Co-Owner Andrew Brady. Ms. Friel said they intend to serve food that is both less wasteful with ingredients and at an

ANC

NOTES FROM THE JAN 14 MEETING

Dear Annie, New Restaurant at 1741 Mass. Ave

Dear Annie is an upcoming restaurant and wine bar taking over the space formerly occupied by Nomad at 1741 Massachusetts Ave. Having been approved for zoning, its owners hoped for broader community support ahead of its January 29th License Commission hearing for a beer and wine license.



To introduce Agassiz neighbors to the restaurant and allow them the chance to ask questions or voice concerns, co-owner Lauren

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



February 11th, 7:30 PM
Maud Morgan Arts,
20A Sacramento Street

AGENDA

- *Introducing Grassroots MA, a cannabis retail shoppe proposed for 1674 Mass Ave (previously Evergood Market)*
- *An update on the state of local businesses in Cambridge, from Cambridge Local First*

affordable price point for customers.

The back section of Dear Annie will be a dedicated community-use space, available to book for events such as meetings, book clubs and exhibitions. In total between the two spaces, the restaurant will have a 65 seat capacity.

“We’re trying to create the intimacy like we have at Rebel Rebel,” she said. “In a small space, people are kind of forced to interact with each other, which we find helps galvanize them.”

However, Ms. Friel shared that the intimate space at Rebel Rebel is limiting for its community-oriented goals. She told ANC that the wine bar can’t accommodate all the requests it receives while still serving the public.

“We wanted to create a space that can serve both the public and those who want to participate in events,” she said. “We’re not really providing for the neighborhood if we’re shutting down. [Dear Annie] solves that problem.”

Ms. Friel noted that she and her partners are deeply invested in the neighborhood both as business owners and locals. She’s lived in the Cambridge area herself for “upwards of 20 years.”

For that reason, she emphasized that she and her partners are focused on “holding the integrity” of the neighborhood and bringing “new energy” to it.

After hearing Ms. Friel’s presentation and answers to questions, Joel Bard, long-time Agassiz resident and member of ANC, made a motion to support the restaurant. All voted in favor.

Other interested residents were invited to attend Dear Annie’s license commission meeting on January 29th.

Q&A

Q: What will your hours be?

A: If approved, we will be open 3:00 PM-midnight but stop serving alcohol at 11:30 PM.

Q: How do you envision people reserving the community space?

A: We have someone who does community events at Rebel Rebel named Margot and they are booked with a sliding scale fee. A charity, nonprofit or academic entity can book for a low room fee to cover staffing costs.

Q: Where did the name come from?

A: We wanted something that sounds intimate. We also only employ women at Rebel Rebel and will place female-identifying people in management at Dear Annie. A lot of the work focused on in the community spaces are aligned with the Feminist movement.



Discussion of Neighborhood Name Change

Maya Counter, a senior at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, joined Agassiz Neighborhood Council to discuss her ongoing effort to change the neighborhood’s name.

She explained to ANC that her interest in renaming the neighborhood began in her AP US History class, where she was asked to research the history of her neighborhood. After coming upon information about the neighborhood’s namesake, Swiss biologist Louis Agassiz, she said she was “disgusted” by what she read, citing the scientist’s racist legacy. After that discovery, Ms. Counter reached out to former City Councilor, now Mayor, Sumbul Siddiqui to discuss how to change the neighborhood’s name.

“She’s given me her full support,” Ms. Counter told ANC. “Now we’re talking about what that might look like, and I want to be more interactive with the community, get a sense of how people feel and generate a constructive conversation.”

This desire is what prompted her to bring the issue to ANC. She had also posted about her project on the social media app NextDoor. Ms. Counter said she is expected to speak on the issue before City Council on February 3rd.

“I just want to know how people feel,” she said. “Feedback is helpful, as well as knowing who I’m up against and who I’m with.”

The conversation was kicked off with a question of how the neighborhood was first named. Attendees debated its origin, with someone proposing that the name could have possibly come from Agassiz’s wife, Elizabeth Cabot Cary Agassiz, who was the co-founder and first president of Radcliffe College.

Community Liaison Phoebe Sinclair, who was moderating the evening’s conversation, shared a note from Charles Sullivan of the Cambridge Historical Commission on the history of naming the Agassiz School, confirming that its name came from Louis Agassiz. Another attendee added that it was common for neighborhoods in Cambridge to be named for the schools they surrounded.

One attendee spoke on the importance of having a conversation about the name change because it can be a “teachable moment,” pointing out that sometimes names are changed without anyone noticing or understanding why.

“I would hope it would be an opportunity to educate,” Ms. Counter said. “It’s also important to recognize that there are many institutions in this country named after bigots, and it doesn’t represent the millions of people of color who live here.”

Tom Meek, who reported on the meeting for Cambridge Day, a web-only news source, shared that City Council recently passed a motion by Denise E. Simmons that will reevaluate all names of Cambridge buildings, streets, and institutions to determine if they are indirectly or directly

related to the slave trade and change them through due process. Ms. Counter said she had already connected with Ms. Simmons about their common goals, and the two are working together.

Some suggested providing some context for the name, instead of changing it, or selecting a different member of the Agassiz family as the namesake, but Ms. Counter said she didn’t feel it would be as effective.

“I hear people mentioning his daughter and his wife, and it just sounds like people want to keep the Agassiz history, even knowing about his racism,” she said. “His science was rooted in racism.”

“I don’t think a neighborhood has the ability to put up a sign at every point of entry to explain why the name is still Agassiz,” neighborhood resident Meg Salocks added. “I understand the motivation to put better context behind the name, but I don’t think a neighborhood is the space for that.”

ANC Moderator Fred Meyer brought up a counterargument that others said was often used in the process of renaming the elementary school: Other places and institutions are named after historical figures with racist histories. He specifically named George Washington and Abraham Lincoln as examples.

“You can’t get rid of Lincoln or Washington, but you can put them in perspective,” Ms. Counter said. The platforms to educate the public on these figures are far larger, she said, which isn’t the case for Agassiz.

While the beginning of the conversation focused on history and Ms. Counter’s motivations, it later became a discussion of what the process of renaming would look like. Her short timeline was of concern to some, as her City Council meeting was dated for two weeks after the ANC meeting. Agassiz resident Kate Frank advised Ms. Counter to not rush through the process.

“There’s no reason to treat it like an emergency,” she said. “You would not want unnecessary opposition if the opposition isn’t to the concept.”

Ms. Frank noted that other entities carrying the name based on the neighborhood may need to change as well, and that takes time and money. Maria LaPage, Executive Director of Agassiz Baldwin Community, thanked Ms. Frank for bringing up that point but added that she felt burdened by the Agassiz name.

“It always seems like sort of a drag on our mission to be an inclusive, welcoming place,” Ms. LaPage said. “I acknowledge that it’s work and energy to change our name if the neighborhood name changes, but it’s work I’m willing to do.”

Among a few attendees, there was a concern about not including enough voices from the neighborhood in the process. They suggested a larger forum for members of the community to discuss the issue or other, more remotely accessible, options for the neighborhood to provide feedback.

“Cambridge has a participatory budgeting process, so there are models for participatory involvement,” Jonathan Lehigh, a member of ABC Board of Directors and neighborhood resident, said.

Others noted that opportunities for more residents to engage in the process could be a boon to Ms. Counter’s chances for support from City Council.

In place of Agassiz, Ms. Counter wants to name the neighborhood after Maria L. Baldwin, the African American educator and first black female principal in Massachusetts and the Northeast for whom the elementary school is now named. She said she’s open to hearing other options but emphasized that having the neighborhood named Baldwin is her ultimate goal.

While there was some discord over how to change the name or what to change it to, there seemed

to be general support for at least removing Louis Agassiz as the neighborhood’s namesake.

Ms. Counter shared that her next step is to meet with City Councilor Simmons and Mayor Siddiqui before meeting with City Council.

To officially record ANC’s support, Joel Bard proposed the following motion, which was seconded and voted on unanimously:

“There is a strong consensus in the neighborhood council in support of a name change, to be discussed in forums over the coming months with an opportunity to educate neighbors about the relevant issues, with the objective to come up with a recommended name from the neighborhood.”

To learn more or to participate in an ANC sub-committee related to the proposed name change, please contact Phoebe Sinclair, Community Liaison, at psinclair@agassiz.org or (617) 755-6926.



Community



24TH ANNUAL HIP HOP FESTIVAL FOR KIDS

Clap and dance along to an energetic show of hip hop dance and music performed by local professional and youth performers. This year’s Hip Hop Festival is generously supported by a grant from the Cambridge Arts Council and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

This year's performers are:

- Naheem Garcia
- DJ Drew-Nyce
- Floor Lords
- Origination
- King Open Extended Day
- Intrigue Group
- Cambridge Community Center: Hip Hop Transformation

When: Thursday, February 20th, 2:00-3:00 PM

Where: Maria L. Baldwin School Stage, basement-level, 85 Oxford Street, Cambridge

Tickets: \$5 per family suggested donation, FREE for afterschool groups (RSVP with the name of your program, the number of children and number of adults planning to attend to Ana Balbino at abalbino@agassiz.org)

DISEASED BEECH TREE REMOVED FROM OXFORD ST.

Prepared by Thomas J. Lucey, Harvard University Director of Government & Community Relations

Despite the best efforts of our arborists and landscaping personnel, the Beech tree located on the parcel adjacent to Oxford Street near Pierce Hall has been deemed a public safety hazard and will need to be removed.

Unfortunately, the tree is compromised by multiple afflictions, which pose significant risks to the tree's structural integrity. In an effort to ensure that all available resources were utilized on behalf of the tree, an independent arborist and the City of Cambridge's arborist were consulted and agreed that the tree cannot be saved.

In the spring, three new specimens will be planted based on their suitability to the site along with the goal of replacing and expanding the tree canopy. Experts consider these new specimens,

a tulip tree; a yellowwood; and a dawn redwood, extremely well-suited for the site.

When the tree began showing signs of distress a few years ago, an Arnold Arboretum plant propagator was invited to take cuttings. From those original cuttings, we were able to rear five healthy grafts. Those offspring are now 2 to 3 feet tall, enjoying life in 3-gallon containers on the Arboretum campus and will soon become part of Harvard's campus. In addition, some of the wood from the felled tree will be salvaged, if possible, for still-to-be-determined future use.



CONSIDER JOINING OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

If you feel a connection to the mission of ABC and are looking for meaningful volunteer work consider joining the ABC Board of Directors. ABC plays an important role in the community and the Board helps to ensure the long-term success, sustainability, and viability of the organization.

Position

The Board supports the work of ABC and provides mission-based leadership and strategic governance. While day-to-day operations are led by ABC's Executive Director (ED), the Board-ED relationship is a partnership, and the appropriate involvement of the Board is both critical and expected.

Qualifications

Who should join the ABC Board?

- Parents of children in ABC Children's Programs or Maud Morgan Arts classes
- Adult participants of Maud Morgan Arts or Living Well Network
- Agassiz Neighborhood residents
- Local business leaders with an interest in community
- Community members committed to the mission of ABC and interested in visual, arts community building, children's programming, aging-in-place, issues of equity and access, anti-racism, or non-profit governance and fundraising.

Board Terms

The ABC Board slate is approved annually by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council at the May Annual Meeting. ABC's Board Members are elected for two-year terms, and officers (Chairs, Treasurer, Clerk) are elected each year. There is no term limit and terms begin in September.

Schedule

Board Meetings are generally held from 6:00-7:30 PM on the second Wednesday of the month from Sept-June. Additional committee meetings may be scheduled as needed. Board members are expected to attend 75% of the monthly meetings.

Apply

To apply, review the complete position description at <http://bit.ly/abc-board-posting> and please send a statement that explains your interest in the Board as well as relevant experience and a résumé (optional). If you have questions or are wondering if the ABC Board might be a good fit for you, contact ED Maria LaPage. She can be reached at mlapage@agassiz.org or (617) 349-6287 x17.

UPCOMING CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS REGISTRATION DATES

Mark your calendars: Registration for upcoming summer and school year programs begins soon! More information on Children's Programs can be found here: <http://bit.ly/abc-childrens-programs>

Outback Summer Program

Registration opens online Sunday, March 1st.

Kindergarten and 1st-5th Grade Afterschool 2020-21

Registration opens online for currently enrolled families on Wednesday, April 15th.

For new families, it begins Friday, May 1st.

REMEMBERING RICHARD GRIFFIN

Richard B. Griffin of Howland Street, died peacefully at home on January 20, 2020, at the age of 91. Beloved husband of Susan Keane, and devoted father of Emily Griffin, he was preceded in death by his parents, John H. Griffin and Alice (Barry) Griffin; by his brother, John H. Griffin Jr.; by his sister-in-law, Joanne Griffin; and by his nephews Stephen Griffin and Gregory Griffin. He is survived by his wife and daughter, and by four siblings: Sister Maureen Griffin, SNDdeN.; Kevin B. Griffin; Carol M. Griffin; and Gerald G. Griffin; his sisters-in-law Mary Rose Griffin and Wynne Griffin; and by three generations of nieces and nephews.



Richard was born in Peabody, Massachusetts, on August 19, 1928. He grew up in Belmont and Watertown, attending public schools and St. Sebastian's School. He was a member of the Harvard Class of 1951, but left the College after two years to enter the Society of Jesus. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1962, a year marked by the opening session of Vatican II. Richard enthusiastically embraced the teachings of the Council, and its spirit would mark him for the rest of his life.

From 1968 to 1975, at the height of the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War, Richard was Catholic chaplain at Harvard, where he inspired many members of the community and

displeased others. At the same time, he had begun to question his vocation to the priesthood. In 1975 he was released from his vows and left the Jesuits, while retaining lifelong ties of friendship to the Jesuit community.

The rest of Richard’s career was marked by profound engagement in the field of aging: first as the director of the Cambridge Council on Aging, and then as a journalist, producing weekly columns for the Cambridge Chronicle. Marriage and fatherhood brought him great joy, and he loved nothing better than conversations with new and old friends. A friend characterized this activity as a ministry of friendship, and he continued to exercise it to the end of his life.

ABC Remembers Richard Griffin

Richard attended countless community events, Neighborhood Council meetings, and was frequently seen learning new technological tricks at the Living Well Network weekly Computer Lounge. Alongside his wife Susan and daughter Emily, Richard made many contributions to the neighborhood and community, including a newsletter “The Howl,” which lives on in archives at Cambridge Historical Society. Learn more at: <http://bit.ly/howl-cambridge-historical>

Richard was our “civic friend”, a term he coins in his self-published autobiography *Becoming Merely Human - A Spiritual Journey to Imperfection*, and he will be greatly missed.



Living Well Network

LIVING WELL NETWORK BOOK GROUP

Prepared by Kathy Dalton, Living Well Network Manager

Come discuss issues we all face as we advance into the next years. We’ll look at works that approach this big topic from various perspectives: practical, philosophical, spiritual, political, even artistically. Join a discussion with others 55+ to discuss, critique, applaud, and examine what we find in these writings. Our goal is to meet monthly, and

we’ll have light refreshments on hand. We will begin with a short piece for our first meeting then choose what to take on next.

Limited to 15 people. Please email Kathy Dalton at kdalton@agassiz.org to sign up and access the article.

- What:** Living Well Network Book Group
- When:** Tuesday, February 25th
6:30-8:00 PM (First Meeting)
- Where:** Maud Morgan Arts,
20 Sacramento St.



Maud Morgan Arts

DISSIPATE. DISAPPEAR. DISPEL. AT THE CHANDLER GALLERY

- Exhibition:** February 3-28, 2020
- Artist Talk:** Thursday, February 27,
6:00-7:00 PM

Deborah Davidson’s “Dissipate. Disappear. Dispel” is currently on display at the Chandler Gallery until February 28th.

The show will be complemented by “Ideation: Redefining the Studio,” on February 27th with Kate Gilbert, artist and founder of Now and There, a public art curator in Boston. Davidson will be in conversation with Gilbert about an artist’s ideas and inspirations, and how they extend beyond their singular studio practice.

Learn more: <http://bit.ly/deborah-davidson>



Community Calendar

February 2020

Tuesday, February 11	7:30-9:00 PM	ANC Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento St., 2D Studio All are welcome, please join us
Wednesday, February 12	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St., 2nd Floor Public welcome
Monday, February 17th		Presidents' Day holiday, ABC School Programs & office, & Maud Morgan Arts closed
Thursday, February 20	2:00-3:00 PM	24th Annual Hip Hop Festival, Maria L. Baldwin School Stage, basement-level, 85 Oxford Street
Tuesday, February 25	6:30-8:00 PM	Living Well Network Book Group, First Meeting, Maud Morgan Arts, 20 Sacramento St.
Thursday, February 27	6:00-7:00 PM	Ideation: Redefining the Studio, Maud Morgan Arts

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