

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

February 2021

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ANC News

NOTES FROM FEBRUARY 9TH ANC MEETING

Neighborhood Name Change Process Updates

Incorporating feedback from the last Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting, Phoebe Sinclair, Community Liaison and facilitator for ANC, presented an updated timeline for the neighborhood name change process.

To introduce the new timeline, Ms. Sinclair reminded ANC of its January 2020 vote, which noted “a strong consensus . . . in support of a name change,” as well as the February 10th, 2020 City Council Policy Order that asks City staff to help the neighborhood “make a determination as to how to arrive at an appropriate, official name change.”

As she had in previous meetings where the name

changed was discussed, Ms. Sinclair also named specific tensions that have arisen, such as the desire to honor Louis Agassiz’s scientific legacy, the acknowledgment and redress of the harms resulting from racism and white supremacy espoused by Agassiz, and the logistical challenge of reaching and educating a wider audience during a pandemic.

She then shared the new timeline, which is:

- **January & February 2021:** Letters sent to universities, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and nearby religious institutions; Mayor Siddiqui and Councillor Simmons (the policy order originators) were invited to share our outreach with their networks; residents were re-invited to submit names or material for the digital context library with a new, extended deadline of February 22nd
- **March 2021:** Cambridge Community Development (CDD) will help flyer the neighborhood, inviting residents to take the survey, which was updated with suggestions from the December 8th ANC meeting
- **March 18th, 2021:** The new deadline to respond to the survey
- **March & April 2021:** City and ABC staff will tabulate survey results and report back to ANC and the City Council

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



March 9, 7:30 PM
ZOOM - RSVP by visiting
<http://bit.ly/anc-rsvp>

- Report back from City meeting on community groups in Cambridge
- Name change next steps: flyer distribution and digital survey

Ms. Sinclair invited ANC Members to get involved by submitting to the context library, sharing that resource with friends and neighbors, and by taking the survey when it's available in early March.

Comments from ANC

"I'm really anxious to make sure that when you do survey people, that people can look at it and say it was really well done," said Tom Delbanco, after sharing his desire that the survey not feel biased.

Kate Frank noted that one piece of background not included in Ms. Sinclair's presentation was the policy order, proposed by Councillor Simmons, to evaluate any city property with a name connected to the slave trade.

"I personally see what we're fitting in with that spirit," Ms. Frank said. "It's not like we're doing something random or on our own. It's part of a bigger effort, and we're a visible step from the community on that effort."

Fred Meyer suggested including a question in the survey that would allow respondents to rank their preferences for new name options, and the results would take those rankings into account.

"I think that proportional representation or counting is very useful when you have a lot of candidates, and a lot of votes," Mr. Delbanco responded to Mr. Meyer. "My hypothesis is that [from this survey], you'll have a very clear distinction on who or what wins."

Mr. Meyer also shared his concern that City Council could act with inadequate neighborhood input, or without any neighborhood input at all.

"The only way to make sure we have a reasonable number of residents is to have them vote like they did in previous elections," he said.

Ms. Sinclair clarified that the City Council is looking to the neighborhood for

a recommendation, and the survey results would not be a binding vote.

"The City was brought in as a partner to help spread the word and will do a flyer drop to make sure as many people can see and respond to the survey as possible," she added.

"The decision rests with the neighborhood," Joel Bard said. "If we follow the process as outlined, I'd be shocked if the city didn't go along with it."

"We've made some pretty important decisions with a lot fewer people than are here tonight," he added. "Oddly enough, this Zoom setting is helping grow our audience. I don't think we've ever done [a neighborhood survey]. I think this is a terrific process and I'm all in favor of it."

Learn more:

<https://bit.ly/neighborhood-dev-projects>



Update on Agency Name Change

Allegra Fletcher, a member of the Agassiz Baldwin Community Board of Directors, shared that the agency would be embarking on a process to change its name, simultaneous to but separate from the neighborhood name change.

In June 2020, the ABC Board voted to remove "Agassiz" from the organization's name, and released the following statement to the public:

"We renounce the racist legacy of Louis Agassiz. To better align our name with our ongoing organizational anti-racist values and

practices, the ABC Board is removing the Agassiz name from our organization. We will embark on a community-oriented process to develop a new organization name that better reflects our mission and values."

Prior to this statement, the agency began engaging in anti-racism work in the winter of 2017, receiving a grant in the spring of that year to deepen this effort. Since then, there have been continued efforts with the staff and Board to learn and work with equitable practices.

Questions from ANC

"What is the organization's governance structure? Why can't you call yourself whatever you want?" asked Tom Delbanco.

"Because we're an agency rooted in community, we want the community to be part of the name change," Ms. Fletcher responded. "We want as many of those voices as possible."

"So are you asking for consultation but not decision making?" Mr. Delbanco asked.

"The board made this decision back in June, but we felt like we did want community input," Maria LaPage, Executive Director of ABC, said. "At this point, we're looking to move forward, even though we're still in the middle of the neighborhood name discussion. We don't have a plan of what the community input will look like yet. The purpose of this meeting is to be clear that there are two different things happening, and they are not the same process."

To further clarify the difference between ANC and ABC, Joel Bard explained that the organization used to be known as the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, and the Board was made up of neighborhood residents.

"Once the programs became more extensive, the Board got more diverse in representing the people who were part of those programs," he said. "The two entities have now gone in different directions."

Mr. Bard said that, since ANC is now under the umbrella of the larger organization, he'd be confused if the two had different names. He also wondered about how the change might impact or be reflected in the bylaws.

Mr. Delbanco wondered if there could be a chart to illustrate how the two entities intersect each other.

"It is confusing," Ms. LaPage said. "At this time, most of our programs serve a citywide audience, so our stakeholders are much broader than they were historically. We are looking at our bylaws and thinking about the implications of that."

"We aren't the only organization who has different pieces that historically made sense at one point," said Kate Frank. "When the ABC entity got larger and separately funded from the Community Schools, the structures could've changed, but that wasn't the focus. It doesn't, in the long term, make a whole lot of sense to me for the organizations to go on as two separate streams when they need to interact to do well."

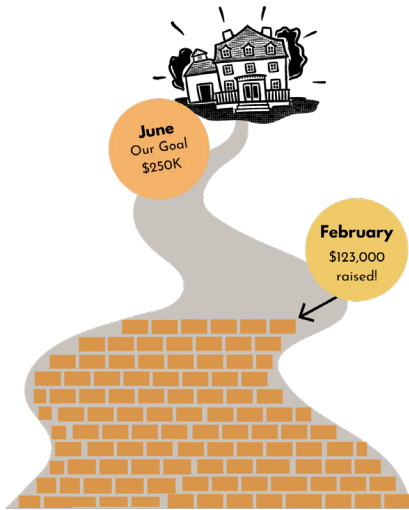
Ms. Frank suggested using future meetings to figure out the relationship between ANC and ABC.

"There are three different names at play, and the process for each one of them is going to be separate," Ted Live said, referring to the names of the neighborhood, ABC, and ANC. "I don't believe that the organization has to have exactly the same name or a close relative of it, but that's a decision for the Board to make, not us. ANC's name should reflect whatever the neighborhood name is, given the role of being a council representing all of the neighborhood."

Ms. LaPage said that, while there is no clear path yet, she wanted to make sure that the agency name change was back on the people's radars and that they would be looped in as the process moves forward.



Community



COMMUNITY BREAKS RECORDS WITH GENEROSITY (THANK YOU!)

At the end of 2020 and early 2021, the community came together and made an incredible \$127,000 in 330 donations to support ABC!

This record-breaking level of support has brought us just over halfway to our goal of raising \$250,000 by June, which will help sustain our critical work as we recover from financial challenges caused by the pandemic. Together we have made tremendous progress, and we are extremely grateful for each and every donation.

Because of your incredible generosity, we are not only in a much stronger position to continue our current COVID-19 response, but can also begin envisioning the future as we emerge from this crisis. Our gratitude is beyond words. Thank you.

While we see that there's still a lot of hard but important work on the path in front of us, we also see, even more clearly, what's waiting for us

at the end: Welcoming more kids to Outback for a much-needed summer of fun.

Thank you for being on this journey with us, Maria LaPage, Executive Director and the entire team at ABC.



25TH ANNUAL HIP HOP FESTIVAL CANCELED

For the last two and a half decades, the Baldwin School gymnasium has filled up with families, students from programs across the city, and other members of our community to watch performance after performance of talented youth hip hop dancers and musicians. While the Hip Hop Festival of Music and Dance for school-age children has always been full of treasured traditions, each year has brought its own unique fun and surprises.

Unfortunately, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel this year's event, but we are looking forward to the next time we can gather to celebrate and enjoy hip hop dance and music.

In its 25 years, there has been a constant presence in Naheem, who has taken the role of MC to a whole new level. His energy and enthusiasm always set the tone for our audiences, encouraging them to make noise, jump around, dance, and really feel the music.

It's hard to put every aspect of Hip Hop Fest into words. Whether you've never been and are trying

to imagine, or you have and want to reminisce, we recommend watching last year's video to really feel the spirit of the event:

<http://bit.ly/hiphopfest-2020>

Find photos from past events on our Flickr page:

<http://bit.ly/community-event-photos>



friends, and basketball (and sneakers!). He remained close to friends made in preschool, Baldwin Elementary and Cambridge Rindge and Latin (CRLS) schools, summer camp and wherever he traveled. He had a precious capacity for friendship and human connection.

Zandy was always his best self when he was with other people, sharing his sweetness and his warmth. He was an enthusiastic story-teller and an eager listener. He had a beautiful smile which could turn into great bursts of laughter, it felt good just to be in his presence. In addition to his heartbroken parents, sister, nephews and extended family, Zandy leaves behind countless friends whose lives were made better, simply by knowing him. Private funeral services and burial took place in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

To honor his life, the Zandy Bard Fund has been established to create opportunities for Cambridge young adults that they would otherwise not have access to. To contribute by mail, make checks out to Cambridge Community Foundation, c/o The Link, 255 Main St., 8th Floor, Cambridge, MA 02142, (include "Zandy Bard Fund" in the check memo), or online at: <https://bit.ly/3e2jwtf>

REMEMBERING ALEXANDER BARD

Excerpted from the Boston Globe Obituaries

Alexander Joseph "Zandy" Alexander Joseph Bard, age 32 years and known to the world as Zandy, passed away on January 15, 2021 in San Jose, CA. Born in Boston, Zandy lived most of his first 20 years in Cambridge with his adoring parents, Joel & Betsy Bard. He lived his last year in San Jose close by his loving, devoted and remarkable sister, Emilie Bard, and his nephews Eman and Ezra. Zandy's greatest passions were his family,



City Wide

MBTA FORGING AHEAD UPDATE

Prepared by MBTA

On Monday December 14, staff presented to the MBTA Board a modified base service proposal, based on feedback from riders and community members. View a recording of the meeting here: <http://bit.ly/3sttrfF>

We are pleased to report that based on your input the MBTA has modified our base service to decrease the impacts of the service changes, focusing on maintaining access (within ½ mile) and span (the time our services operate) for as many riders as possible. Our Board approved these service changes on December 14, 2020.

Some additions to our original base service proposal include:

- Malden/Melrose: preserve the Route 131 (peak service only) and Route 136 (combined with the 137)
- Quincy: Continue to operate the Route 230 between Braintree and Quincy Center
- Canton: preserve the Route 716
- Hull: preserve the Route 714
- Maintain the Suburban Subsidy program, which partially funds service in five communities (Bedford, Beverly, Burlington, Lexington, and Mission Hill).
- Continue to operate bus service after midnight, although potentially with reduced frequency.
- Continue to operate the E Line to Heath Street.
- Continue to operate rapid transit service after midnight, although potentially with reduced frequency.
- Maintain some weekend service on the higher ridership and/or Transit Critical Commuter Rail lines (Providence, Worcester, Middleboro, Rockport and Fairmount), and only suspend the low ridership lines.
- Continue to serve Cedar Park Commuter Rail stop.
- Continue to operate some Hingham/Hull weekday ferry service. The exact schedule is still to be determined, along with which Boston stops will be served.

For more information on other service changes that have been approved, please visit www.mbta.com/forging-ahead.

A summary of public feedback received can be found at: www.mbta.com/forging-ahead-comments

Through the rest of winter and into spring, the MBTA Community Liaison Team will continue to reach out as part of the implementation process. We hope to work with the community to spread information about when, where, and how the approved changes will go into effect.

CAMBRIDGE POLICE WARN RESIDENTS ABOUT INCREASE IN CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFTS

Prepared by Cambridge Police Dept.

The Cambridge Police are warning residents about a recent increase in catalytic converter thefts in Cambridge. Catalytic converters, which are part of a vehicle's exhaust system, are most sought out by thieves because they contain precious metals and can be sold for scrap. In addition to Cambridge, thefts of catalytic converters are also reportedly rising across the country.

After a series of thefts were reported by residents primarily in the Cambridgeport neighborhood between January 16-17, another surge of thefts has occurred in the Wellington-Harrington and East Cambridge neighborhoods over the last two weeks. All reported catalytic converter thefts that have taken place this year in Cambridge have involved 2004-2009 Toyota Prius'.

Using a data driven-approach, officers have increased their patrols in the locations and during the times in which a higher volume of these thefts have been reported. Visit the CPD website to read tips on preventing catalytic converter theft: <http://bit.ly/3b9AjsP>

Anyone with any information related to these thefts is asked to call the Cambridge Police at (617) 349-3300. Those who wish to provide information anonymously may dial the Cambridge Police Anonymous Crime Tip Hotline at (617) 349-3359 and leave a message.

Anonymous tips may also be sent via the Cambridge Police MyPD mobile app or via text message to 847411. Begin your text with TIP650 and then type your message.

To send anonymous tips via email, visit www.CambridgePolice.org/Tips.



Make your voice heard about the neighborhood name

In 2020, the Agassiz Neighborhood Council (ANC) started a community conversation about whether to remove Agassiz's name and instead honor Maria L. Baldwin, educator and first African American headmaster in New England, or a different person or neighborhood element of note. The neighborhood's namesake, Louis Agassiz, was an American-Swiss biologist, geologist, and Harvard professor, who promoted the theory of polygenesis, the belief that God created each human "race" as separate species. Polygenesis has been used to justify white supremacy and advance racial inequities. ANC is looking for the broader community to lend its voice to this process.



- ▶ Watch videos, read written statements and review resources about the history of Agassiz, Baldwin and the neighborhood, and how other residents feel about renaming
- ▶ <https://bit.ly/contextlibrary>



TYPE INTO WEB BROWSER:
[surveymonkey.com /r/LZQZQXG](https://surveymonkey.com/r/LZQZQXG)

SCAN WITH PHONE CAMERA:



DEADLINE:
03/18/21

Community Calendar

March 2021

Monday, March 1st		ABC & Maud Morgan Arts programs and offices closed
Tuesday March 2nd		ABC Children's Programs closed through Friday, March 5th
Tuesday, March 9th	7:30-9:00 PM	ANC Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Receive ZOOM link by RSVPing at http://bit.ly/anc-rsvp All are welcome, please join us!
Thursday, March 18th		Deadline to respond to survey about the neighborhood name

The Whistler is published monthly September-June by the Agassiz Baldwin Community, distribution 750 in 2019. Call (617) 349-6287 to receive by email or mail. The newsletter is available online at 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. Editorial team: Phoebe Sinclair, Community Liaison & Editor; Jessica Leach, Scribe; Ashley Yee, Guest Writer.

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