the Whistler

Newsletter of the Baldwin Neighborhood Council | February/March 2023

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BNC News

NOTES FROM THE FEB 14 BNC MEETING

New BNC Logo

To reflect the neighborhood council's renaming from Agassiz to Baldwin in December 2021, Baldwin Neighborhood Council member Jill Delbanco is working with Phoebe Sinclair, Community Liaison and BNC facilitator, and Greggy Bazile, a graphic designer and graduate of Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, to create a new logo.

At the February 14th meeting, Ms. Delbanco presented two different logo options for BNC to review and provide suggestions. Ms. Delbanco first explained how she began working on the new logo with Ms. Sinclair and Mr. Bazile.

"I've had experience with designing logos, and working with people who have done them digitally," she said.

She explained that she had the idea to get in touch with the CRLS art department to utilize their talent. Through Michele Maxwell, head of the Creative Design Department, she was connected with Mr. Bazile, who is a Footwear Design Apprentice at New Balance.

During the meeting, the logo design working group decided to not share the initial design options with others, (beyond those in attendance), so that they would be able to incorporate this feedback and focus on finalizing the design. After sharing the two design options, Ms. Delbanco asked for BNC's thoughts and comments.

"I don't know if we want a logo with no people in it," Kate Frank said. "Maybe we can consider combining the people from the second logo with the design of the first."

"Ideally everyone will be seeing the logo in color but a lot will be printing in black and white as well," Peggy Kutcher commented, citing a specific concern about a feature of one of the logos.

NEXT BNC MONTHLY MEETING

April 11, 7:30 PM

ZOOM - RSVP by visiting https://bit.ly/bnc-rsvp

AGENDA

- *Retail Cannabis Update with Halani, Inc.*
- *Proposed Change of Use for 815 Somerville Avenue (Porter Square)*
- *Finalized BNC Logo*

"The second logo is readable whether you size it up or down," Janet Burns said. "I think it's kind of cliché to have people's arms up in the air, but I like the verticality of it."

Others shared that they thought the second design was bold and communicated joy. Many also appreciated its simplicity and how well it represents the area.

"The first logo option is vague and not as visually coherent as the one on the right," Peter Nohrnberg said.

"One thought I have for the second logo design is that the font size for 'Baldwin' and 'Council' should be a little smaller to make it more compact," Tom Delbanco said.

After hearing the feedback, Ms. Delbanco thanked those in attendance and said she was looking forward to discussing their constructive suggestions with Mr. Bazile and Ms. Sinclair.

Ms. Sinclair also reminded everyone that the logo is meant just for the Neighborhood Council and not for Agassiz Baldwin Community, the umbrella organization. At this time, the team is working on incorporating this feedback and are not accepting additional comments or suggestions. The new logo will be shared once the design is finalized.

In-Person Meetings

After nearly three years of virtual meetings, Baldwin Neighborhood Council is possibly ready to return to meeting in-person. Phoebe Sinclair explained that Agassiz Baldwin Community staff met internally to discuss if and how to reintroduce in-person events and meetings. The first step in making this decision was to discuss the topic with and survey BNC so Council Members could voice their thoughts and concerns.

"In the past, we heard definite interest in coming back together in-person, interest in hybrid meetings, as well as some reservations about hybrid meetings," Ms. Sinclair said before inviting meeting attendees to speak.

Initial thoughts included weighing the pros and cons of the three options.

"One thing about virtual meetings is that you don't have the opportunity to interact with neighbors before and after the meeting," Jill Delbanco said.

"At least in the wintertime, it would be hard for me to go back in-person after the convenience of Zoom," Peggy Kutcher said. She also shared her experience with a different neighborhood group that began meeting in-person with required masking, which she said had lower turnout than typical. This she credited to Covid cautiousness.

Tom Delbanco stressed the importance of good technology for hybrid meetings so that virtual attendees can not only hear and see well, but be seen and heard well.

There was also the question of how to increase and diversify attendance. Mr. Delbanco noted three variables at play: in-person vs. virtual or hybrid, frequency of meetings, and the purpose of the Council.

"It's a little hard to sort out these different variables at once," he added, suggesting that BNC tests out meeting in-person to see how it feels. He also proposed booking guest speakers as a strategy to boost attendance.

"Guest speakers are perfectly useful, but it's not the purpose of the Council, even if that purpose has changed," Kate Frank shared. She said she felt that hybrid was the most inclusive of all the models and could possibly garner the best chance of high attendance, but also recognized that certain kinds of agenda items are usually the draw. Ms. Frank's suggestion was to consider city-wide issues for future agendas.

"The issue of purpose is true of every organization," added Janet Burns.

Ms. Sinclair closed the discussion with a reminder that BNC has had ups and downs in attendance over the years, not just in the past three years, largely depending on what's on the agenda. She also added that the Council needs participants with energy and interest to help do the work of finding agenda topics and thinking about how to engage more people in the neighborhood. Ms. Sinclair has acted as an interim facilitator while meetings have been held virtually, but due to shifting responsibilities within the organization, there is less capacity for ABC staff to continue holding the space in that way.

A survey was sent at the end of February, and ABC staff will review the results, share, and discuss them with Council Members before making a decision about whether to host in-person meetings in the future. The next BNC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 11th.

Community

SEEKING DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS

Agassiz Baldwin Community is seeking volunteers to help deliver food by bicycle from the Cambridge Community Center food pantry to Cambridge households.

Each week volunteers will deliver to households in Cambridge who rely on this food and cannot make it out to the pantry, due to limited mobility, childcare responsibilities, or Covid risk. The time commitment is about 1.5 hours weekly, and volunteers need to be able to lift up to twenty pounds. This is a great opportunity to support your fellow community members, meet other bikers in the area, and enjoy a nice ride. We deliver to households on Fridays.

Motor Vehicles Welcome, Too

Don't bike but interested in volunteering? In addition to our bike fleet, we find it helpful to have a few weekly car volunteers who can take multiple households or deliver in inclement weather. Interested? Contact Phoebe Sinclair at: psinclair@agassiz.org or (617) 349-6287 x10.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 25TH HIP HOP FESTIVAL

After a two-year hiatus, we are finally bringing back the Hip Hop Festival! All ages are invited to attend and dance along with us on Thursday, April 20th 2:00-3:00 PM in our backyard at 20 Sacramento Street (in case of inclement weather, the event will be moved to the Baldwin School). More details to come.

INTRODUCING SILVIA COTE, OUR NEW FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AND ADVOCACY MANAGER

Silvia Cote joined the fka ABC team in January as our Family Partnership and Advocacy Manager, a role that is the first of its kind in our organization. Silvia's position is part of Strengthening Families Together Project, a partnership between fka ABC, Cambridge Community Center, and East End House aiming to understand the barriers and challenges families face in mental health, housing, and financial security. Silvia serves as an advocate for families in our programs, providing support

and connecting them to resources to help address these needs.

We are thrilled to welcome Silvia to the team and are already impressed with what she's accomplished in her short time with us so far, which includes working with several of our program families and students, as well as leading trainings for our staff on trauma-informed care.

Silvia can be reached at scote@agassiz.org.

MARIA BALDWIN AND THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Since becoming the neighborhood namesake, Maria L. Baldwin, who was the first Black Principal in Massachusetts, has been the subject of recent attention - from being one of several trailblazing women featured in a new art installation in Cambridge Crossing to her home on Prospect Street being designated as a historical landmark.

An article published by WBUR on February 24th recognized her work as the first President of the League of Women for Community Service (LWCS), one of the oldest Black women's clubs in the country that, to this day, continues educational and charitable work for the benefit of Boston's Black community.

Baldwin actually purchased the property at 558 Massachusetts Avenue in Boston that became the LWCS headquarters when it was incorporated in 1920, and remains its headquarters today. Reflecting on the League's history, current president Redd Knight talked about Baldwin's historical appointment as the first Black headmaster of an integrated school in New England.

"She was this Black woman put in this position of authority, which is an incredible feat if you consider that this was really the top of the 19th century," Knight told WBUR.

Among her other pioneering marks on history, the article credits Baldwin in helping Josephine St. Pierre, journalist and Civil Rights leader, found the Women's Era Club, the first Black women's club in Boston, and its publication, the Women's Era newspaper.

The full article can be viewed by visiting: https://wbur.fm/3TeFBYs

More information about the League of Women for Community Service can be found by visiting: https://www.lwcsboston.org.

COMMUNITY DISPUTE SETTLEMENT CENTER

Prepared by Sue Marsh

"Hey, I think your security camera set-up looks straight into my house!"

"What's a reasonable payment plan for the condo fees I owe?"

Daily life is filled with disagreements such as these. "Conflict is a part of life," observes Gail Packer, the head of Cambridge-based Community Dispute Settlement Center. "Unfortunately, conflict seems to be a growth business."

Lucky for Cambridge residents (and beyond), CDSC has been providing affordable mediation and conflict resolution services for more than 40 years. With the help of 60 trained and

experienced mediators, CDSC provides services on issues ranging from housing, workplace and neighborhood disputes, to divorce and parenting issues.

Unlike traditional legal services, mediation puts the disputants in the driver's seat, as they talk directly, find common ground, and decide whether to sign onto a mutually determined agreement. After the two parties agree to mediate their dispute, CDSC secures co-mediators, manages the logistics of the sessions, and follows up with all concerned to see if further sessions are needed and wanted. Not only cheaper and quicker than litigation, studies show that people are more likely to respect an agreement they reach in mediation.

In addition to providing these direct services, CDSC invests in the future of mediation by providing training to meet the requirements of mediation set by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, provides conflict skills trainings and workshops, and even develops peer mediation programs in local Cambridge schools.

Intrigued? Thinking of a neighborhood conflict – or other dispute – that might benefit from mediation?

Contact us at: cdscinfo@communitydispute.org, Check out our website at: www.communitydispute.org.

REFLECTIONS ON COMMUNITY GROUPS MEETING WITH NEW CITY MANAGER

Prepared by Kate Frank, long-time Council Member

The Porter Square Neighbors Association arranged a meeting on March 7 to introduce new City Manager, Yi-An Huang, to some of the people and organizations whose purposes include engagement with the City in addressing important neighborhood and city-wide issues.

Each organization was invited to send two representatives for this first meeting. Kate Frank and Phoebe Sinclair volunteered to represent our Baldwin Neighborhood Council but others would be welcome to become involved for future meetings; it is hoped that the City Manager would want to meet with Neighborhood Associations four times per year. For the March 7th meeting, ten organizations were in attendance:

- Porter Square Neighbors Association
- Cambridge Neighborhood Association
- Inman Square Neighborhood Association
- Harvard Square Neighborhood Association
- Baldwin Neighborhood Council
- The Alewife Study Group
- Port Organizing Group
- The Fresh Pond Residents Alliance
- Linden Park Neighborhood Association
- East Cambridge Planning Team

To make the meeting as productive as possible, each organization submitted a brief history of their group, its accomplishments, issues of concern, and what their group could offer to address these concerns presented at the meeting as "themes"; such as affordable housing, climate change, transportation, and infrastructure improvements.

All groups, including those who had experienced some friction or frustration in trying to work with City personnel in the past, emphasized their wish to make a fresh start with the new City Manager, who was gracious, receptive, and attentive to points made about improving collaboration with City Departments.

During the meeting, each representative spoke about how the themes mentioned above affected the organizations they represented, giving specific examples of experiences they had in working with the City, and ways they thought

communication and collaboration could be improved. Each group gave specific examples of matters prioritized by their own neighborhood and examples of the City departments they had worked with: the Police Department; Cambridge Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department; Department of Public Works; and the Community Development Department.

For some groups, collaboration resulted in help finding a space for meetings; for others, it meant exchanging information (such as analyzing flood patterns and how that should affect development of land for new industries, open space, or housing). It was stressed by all that residents could be more useful and cooperative if they had opportunities to present their concerns early in the planning process so they could bring both expertise and/or lived experience to bear before plans were too settled to incorporate new ideas.

Representatives at the meeting took time to enumerate positive experiences they had when seeking help from City personnel, such as developing and distributing surveys of residents' priorities, help with leaflets, equipment to make a livelier presentation at neighborhood meetings, and help gaining flexibility adapting the City's time table for a project to allow more time for resident input. An example from our own neighborhood is how BNC worked with the City to address conflicting views of what should happen in the renovation and re-design of space at Sacramento Field.

BNC leaders worked with City leadership at CDD and DPW to help resolve competing views of priorities for the field. By negotiating for more time to be given for neighbors to hear different perspectives, including time for site-visits to other public open spaces where similar issues were addressed, an impasse between neighbors and the city was discussed and consensus reached that included compromises and resulted in play spaces that met the needs of more people and groups within the neighborhood, and as well defused hostility and mistrust that had been brewing beneath the surfaces of interaction with city personnel.

Over all, the meeting of Neighborhood Associations with the new City Manager was constructive in tone and gave a picture of how our organizations could play a role by bringing each associations' constituents' perspectives and priorities into clearer focus as city personnel plan to address complex projects such as the development of Mass Ave north of Porter Square in our neighborhood; plans for the Alewife district; and plans for restructuring the Inman Square intersection with all of its impacts on traffic flow, bicycle safety, and smaller local businesses; as well as on-going building projects in Harvard, Kendall, and Central Squares.

AFTERSCHOOL PODCAST CLUB

A group of 3rd-5th grade afterschool students have started their own podcast! With the help of teacher RoseLove Joseph, they recorded their first episode as the "Kidz Kast."

The podcast is an outlet for them to discuss and share their thoughts on a range of topics. In the first episode, each of the 10 students took turns talking about pollution and keeping the planet clean. We can't wait to hear what else they'll cover throughout the rest of the school year!

Maud Morgan Arts

SPRING WORKSHOPS AT MAUD MORGAN ARTS

Maud Morgan Arts recently opened registration for four different adult art classes and workshops that will start this spring, including still life painting, ceramics and printmaking. Register online by visiting: bit.ly/mmaspring2023

Still Life Painting with Roz Summer
Mondays, April 10th-May 1st,
10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Immersion Collage with Jenny Brown
Tuesday, April 11th,
6:30-9:00 PM

Transfer Printing in Clay with Chris Wallace and Bob Marcus
Thursdays, May 18th-June 15th,
6:30-9:30 PM

Cyanotypes with Susan Murie
Saturday, June 10th,
11:00 AM-2:00 PM

Handbuilding at Home
If these classes and workshops aren't for you, or if you're looking to make even more art this spring, consider signing up for "Handbuilding at Home."

Visit https://bit.ly/handbuilding_at_home for more information and to register for your box!

Middle School Ceramic Intensive
Maud Morgan Arts is also offering a ceramic intensive workshop for middle schoolers (6th-8th graders) during April Vacation Week (April 18-April 21). Students will explore a mix of handbuilding and wheelthrowing with ceramicist and artist Yuchi Jou.

For more information and online registration, please visit https://bit.ly/mma_april_ceramics

City Wide

HANNAN HEALTHY FOODS SPRING CSA SIGN UPS

Prepared by Susan Redlich, Community Member

Are you missing the taste of an heirloom tomato grown minutes from your door? You can support your taste buds and support local agriculture at the same time.

Sign-ups are now open for Spring and Summer Community Supported Agriculture shares from Hannan Healthy Foods.

Mohammed Hannan's produce is grown organically on land in Lincoln. As a volunteer fieldworker, I can attest to the care with which the veggies are grown. Two CSA weekend pick-up locations are at Lucky Pup (Mass. Ave. and Garfield St.) and Cleenland on Norfolk St. in Central Square. Farmer Hannan lives on Windsor Street in East Cambridge; his two children attend Cambridge public schools.

Details on the farm and the various levels of CSA offerings are here: hannanhealthyfoods.com

Community Calendar
April 2023

Friday, April 7th		ABC and Maud Morgan Arts Afterschool Programs closed for Good Friday
Tuesday, April 11th	**7:30-9:00 PM**	BNC Meeting Receive ZOOM link by RSVPing at https://bit.ly/bnc-rsvp All are welcome, please join us!
Monday, April 17th		ABC offices and children's programs closed in observance of Patriots' Day
Tuesday, April 18th-Friday, April 21st		April Vacation Week Programming at ABC

The Whistler is published monthly September-June by the Agassiz Baldwin Community, distribution 600 in 2022. 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. ABC is located on the traditional homelands of the Massachusett people, and their close neighbors and relatives, the Nipmuc and Wampanoag.

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DO NOT FORWARD

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