

# the Whistler

Newsletter of the Baldwin Neighborhood Council | June / July 2023

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## ***Re-Imagining Leadership for the Future: Co-Directors***

Phoebe Sinclair has joined Maria LaPage in leading our non-profit as Co-Executive Directors. We have been developing this new structure with our board and staff for the past year in response to the shifting landscape of our work and an increased emphasis on anti-racism, as well as re-imagining what leadership looks like, and who fills these roles.

This bold strategic move better equips us to meet challenges of the future, adds capacity and sustainability for our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions efforts, supports balanced decision

## BNC News

### NOTES FROM THE JUNE 13 BNC MEETING

#### ***Introducing the Maria L. Baldwin Community Center***

We are thrilled to announce our organization has a new name! In May 2023, the Board of Directors voted to rename our organization the Maria L. Baldwin Community Center. This decision was informed by a community survey and listening sessions, which showed a strong support for naming the organization after Maria L. Baldwin, whose commitment to education and civic activism strongly aligns with our organization's mission and values.

There is still much work ahead but we are happy to have this important decision behind us! We'll continue to do business as our former name while we go through the legal process to get the name officially changed.

### NEXT BNC MONTHLY MEETINGS

#### ***BNC Meeting (In-person)***

**September 12th, 7:30 PM**

Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento St.

#### **AGENDA**

- BNC Members reflect on the past year
- BNC schedule for 2023/24

#### ***City Council Candidates' Forum***

**October 18th, 7:00-9:00 PM**

Lesley University Hall, Amphitheater, Fl. 2  
1815 Mass. Ave.

Submit questions: [bit.ly/forumquestions2023](https://bit.ly/forumquestions2023)

making, and reflects the collaborative nature of our team. It's no secret that the pandemic stretched non-profit leaders and staff, and that burnout is a major issue. Yet, the resources and social fabric that organizations like the Maria L. Baldwin Community Center help build are vital to the communities we serve and work alongside.

Rather than trying to continue on business-as-usual, we are embracing change and believe this shift will allow us to continue to be a vibrant, responsive, and forward-thinking organization.

### **New Baldwin Neighborhood Council Logo**

Phoebe Sinclair, Jill Delbanco, and Greggry Bazile, the team that worked on the new BNC logo project, shared the final version at the June 13th meeting.



Exploration of a new logo for BNC began in fall 2022, when Ms. Delbanco volunteered to look into options for working with a local designer. Through a contact at Cambridge Rindge & Latin High School's design program, they met Mr. Bazile, a CRLS grad in his first year of college.

"Greggy was just terrific and very responsive to suggestions both by Phoebe and myself, as well as from a meeting where we got feedback," Ms. Delbanco shared.

"The three of us had a good process. It was great working on it," Mr. Bazile said.

Learn more at: [bit.ly/feb-mar-whistler-2023](https://bit.ly/feb-mar-whistler-2023)

### **Herbwell Cannabis Consumer Education Presentation**

Arish Halani, owner of Herbwell Cannabis, returned to BNC to give an educational presentation on cannabis. He shared that his intention is to begin an ongoing dialogue with the community

and provide education around Herbwell's products.

"Given the newness in Cambridge and Massachusetts, it's important for consumers to have an idea of what they're buying," he said. In his presentation, he explained the difference between medical and recreational cannabis, how to visit a dispensary, different product categories such as flower and edibles, methods of consumption, length of onset time, and duration of effects. He then took questions.

### **Q&A**

- Q:** How do you handle an intoxicated customer in the store?" - Tom Delbanco
- A:** We have to complete responsible vendor training, which covers a variety of signs of intoxication. We are not to serve an intoxicated customer. If any of our staff sees someone with red eyes, staggering speech, or not being able to stand on two feet, we are to refuse that customer service. We also have a limit on purchasing. Each customer can only purchase so much at a given time.
- Q:** Are there external bodies that enforce this role?" - Tom Delbanco
- A:** The Cannabis Control Commission (CCC), the state-entity responsible for managing medical and adult-use cannabis in MA, mandates it. The facility is 24/7 camera-secure, and the footage is kept for 90 days. If there are any violations, they are reported to the CCC for investigation.

- Q:** There are a lot of cannabis shops opening. How will you meet the challenge of shops up and down the street? - Skip Schiel
- A:** This presentation is one of many ways we're trying to differentiate ourselves. There are 15-20 dispensaries in Cambridge, all relatively close. Each will have a variety of benefits, pros and cons. We're a minority-owned, family-owned brand. We want to have a boutique feel and provide education that we feel other dispensaries are not providing.

**Q:** When will the medical profession help us figure out where cannabis might fit into what we might be able to do for pain or sleep? - Ruth Ryals

**A:** The basic issue of pain management has gained more currency. A young primary care doctor will be more educated in this area because they will have gone through programs about that. Pain management is very complicated. Cannabis will help some people, it will hurt some people, it will do nothing for others, and that's basically true of everything we use in medicine. - Tom Delbanco

**Q:** With the use of 24/7 video surveillance, is your ID or personal information being recorded on video? - Ruth Ryals

**A:** Your ID is not recorded. We just need to see it for verification. In order to prove to the state that we're verifying you, the checking of your ID is recorded but there is no way to capture any of your personal information through the cameras.

**Q:** Can you clarify the name of the company in Massachusetts that you worked with and will they be your source?

**A:** The name is Resinate, and they will be one of many wholesale partners. We will have over 300, and Resinate would provide one to two percent of our products. We are trying to have the largest selection in Cambridge.

**Q:** Have you selected the muralist for your store window? - Phoebe Sinclair

**A:** We are planning to screenprint the design instead but open to seeing if any talented painters would be able to paint it. We are also open to other artists for spaces inside the store.

Learn more at: [www.herbwellcannabis.com](http://www.herbwellcannabis.com)

### **Lesley University Updates**

Janet Steinmayer, president of Lesley University, and Joanne Kossuth, Chief Operations Officer, returned to share updates on Lesley's campus.

Ms. Steinmayer spoke with BNC in November 2021 to share the vision for the campus. At that time, Lesley was about to launch the first phase of its campus plan, which included selling nine buildings, one of which was purchased by Homeowners Rehab Inc, (HRI) a nonprofit housing developer. HRI, they explained, was not the highest bidder and Lesley made a financial contribution to support the purchase.

The second phase of Lesley's campus updates began this summer, which includes completion of renovated halls on Brattle Street. They've listed fifteen additional properties for sale, some on the Doble Campus in the Baldwin Neighborhood. At the time of the June 13th BNC meeting, they were still completing bidding on these properties.

"I can share that there is not a single bidder who is buying the entire portfolio or even a single block," Ms. Steinmayer said. "Two or three of those will buy more than one property. We've vetted the bidders and, based on what the bidders have told us, believe the proposed changes will enhance the community."

### **Q&A**

**Q:** How quickly do you think the transfers of these properties will take place? - Fred Meyer

**A:** Pretty quickly, late summer into early fall.

**Q:** What kind of enhancements to the Baldwin community do you anticipate? Could you say a little more about that? - Gabriel Malseptic

**A:** Dudley Cafe is opening in the former Hi-Rise space. They are very community-oriented, anxious to work with students and the community. We are looking forward to seeing how they're going to bring their unique style to the neighborhood. - Joanne Kossuth

**Q:** How is the economic state of Lesley? - Tom Delbanco

**A:** We have financial strength and a very large endowment for our size. It hovers around \$200 million. We are working hard to give the best experience we can while living within our means.

**Q:** There used to be nice interactions between the community and students/faculty in the former Sears building [currently Lesley University Hall] in both the retail space and community-use space on the second floor. It seems like there's no commitment to have that interaction and space available. - Peggy Kutcher

**A:** We are still working on this plan given all the challenges of the building and infrastructure. We expect to re-engage with the restaurants on the first floor once we have completed our due diligence. We will be using the space around the staircase for Lesley students. We are also in the process of opening an art store for our students, alumni, and community.

Our programs are also open to the community. We host five or six speakers a year, and the public is welcome to those talks. During COVID, we did have to close a lot of our buildings, but we are coming back. - Ms. Kossuth

**Q:** Do you have any plans to do something with the vacant former gallery space (Marran Gallery on the Doble Campus)? - Skip Schiel

**A:** That is a gallery for student capstones and juries, and is not always utilized. We actually had to use it as a cafe for a period of time. Right now, it's closed because we're finishing up work on the cafe. It will be utilized more in the future. - Ms. Kossuth

**Q:** I'm very interested in Riverside Community Care (RCC). How are you going to make it a facility that the students are free to use and how will it serve the community?  
- Kate Frank

**A:** We opened RCC in October. 40% of appointments are going to members of the community, 60% of appointments to Lesley students and alumni. We continue to see a mix of who is served there. Lesley was responsible for bringing RCC on campus and we continue to support them. It is open to and used by the community. Many people walk in or call to request services.

**Q:** You referenced a bidding process and carefully vetting buyers and investors. Through your vetting process, what actual physical impacts do you expect to the Baldwin community?  
- Gabriel Malseptic

**A:** These purchasers are not buying huge blocks, but one or two properties. Their plans are consistent with the community. Two potential buyers are seeking to convert the spaces to affordable housing.

**Q:** Are there any plans for the building at the corner of Everett and Oxford yet?  
- Fred Meyer

**A:** That's White Hall. We are looking to make the building more amenable to the student experience. It's not totally vacant. We've partnered with Food for Free to establish a community pantry for leftover food. We are still investigating the work needed on upper levels for residences. - Ms. Kossuth

Ms. Steinmayer closed her time by sharing that her team is more than willing to come any time BNC has questions. She advised that individual questions should be directed to:  
joanne.kossuth@lesley.edu

## **NOTES FROM THE JULY 11 ANNUAL MEETING**

### **2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

At the July 11th Annual Meeting, the Neighborhood Council voted unanimously to approve the slate for the 2023-24 Board of Directors.

#### Officers for a One-Year Term

- Andrea Walsh, Chair, Eustis St.
- Hull Fulweiler, Clerk, Howland St.

#### Directors for a Two-Year Term

- Ellen Harkavy, Lancaster St.
- Cicely Carew, Jay St.
- Julie Klump, Harris St.
- Patricia Whelan, Shepard St.

Thank you to this year's Nominating Committee: Terry DeLancey, Jonathan Lehigh, Wendy Prellwitz, and Joan Squeri.

**Update:** in the summer of 2023, changes occurred on the Board. Learn more at: [agassiz.org/about/board](http://agassiz.org/about/board)

### **Dudley Cafe**

Rokeya Chowdhury, co-founder of Dudley Cafe, introduced their new location on the corner on Mass. Ave. and Wendell St. Ms. Chowdhury is also the co-founder of Shanti Indian Cuisine in Dorchester and Roslindale, and Rooted in Roxbury, a retail cannabis shop.

The new Cambridge location of Dudley Cafe opened in July in the space formerly occupied by Hi-Rise on the ground level of a Lesley University building. The original location in Roxbury, opened in 2015, is in a building whose occupants include Boston Public Schools.

Ms. Chowdhury explained that, beyond food and hospitality, her work in the restaurant industry is also community-based. She said she intends to create generational wealth for people of color through enlisting community members as investors in her businesses. Rooted in Roxbury has over 40 individuals from the community who are investors.

"The original Dudley Cafe was created as a community gathering space," she said. "We hope to create the same in Cambridge."

Dudley Cafe is open 8 AM to 5 PM Monday through Saturday, and serves breakfast and lunch, with a menu featuring bowls named after local women in history. In honor of their new neighborhood, one bowl is even named for Maria L. Baldwin.

### **Q&A**

**Q:** I am curious about the thinking behind charging more in Cambridge for the same

food items, so there may be questions about that. - Peggy Kutcher

**A:** The prices are connected to the cost of renting the space in Cambridge, versus our Roxbury space, so it's correlated to operating costs.

**Q:** The square in Roxbury is now called Nubian Square. Is there any reason you kept the Dudley name? - Phoebe Sinclair

**A:** The name originated from Dudley Street, not the square.

Learn more at: [www.dudleycafe.com](http://www.dudleycafe.com)



## **Children's Programs**

### **SUPPORT OUTBACK SCHOLARSHIPS AND THE CIT PROGRAM**

Summer is about starting and celebrating traditions, learning something new, making friends, and creating life-long memories.



Each year, the eight weeks of Outback go by so quickly, but they're never forgotten.

This summer, Outbackers have enjoyed the return to field trips to the beach, pool, and other local destinations. Ceramics class is now offered for different age groups all day. On Fridays, we invite families and caregivers to join us for our longstanding tradition - community lunch, where Outbackers, CITs and staff are recognized for exemplifying one of our many “acts of greatness.”

It is our mission to provide an unforgettable summer experience to as many kids as possible, regardless of income. We rely on the generosity of our community in order to grant scholarships to as many families as need them. This year, we are providing sixty students with financial support to attend Outback.

The CIT program provides middle school students with an enriching skill-building experience focused on leadership, job training, stress-management, identity, and mental health and well-being in a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment. This program has always given middle school youth a chance to practice job skills like interviewing, time-management, completing assigned tasks, filling out timesheets, and supporting our teachers with setting up and leading activities for younger students.

CITs build leadership skills, independence, responsibility, confidence and a sense of belonging, all of which already support mental well-being. However, as we have revamped this program post-pandemic, it has become clear that our middle school students also need increased support with and attention to their mental health and well-being, particularly for trans and nonbinary youth. Making this a new focus of our program feels like a natural extension of what we have always done and better meets the needs of our current youth.

To address these needs, we employed two summer CIT Mentor Teachers and implemented more health and wellness activities into the CIT experience. And one thing that hasn't changed: how much our younger students enjoy having fun and

engaging with their CIT role models at Outback every day!

We hope to raise \$100K to support these scholarships, as well as our Counselor-in-Training (CIT) program. Will you help us get there?

Donate online by visiting [bit.ly/donatetombcc](https://bit.ly/donatetombcc) or by writing a check to Agassiz Baldwin Community, 20 Sacramento Street, Cambridge MA 02138



### **AFTERSCHOOL PRIDE PARADE**

On June 16th, our afterschoolers paraded around the block in our first-ever Pride celebration! All grades, kindergarten through 5th, made signs and dressed up in their rainbow best and were joined by teachers,



Maria L. Baldwin Community Center staff, and even some parents and families as well!

Along the way, they were cheered on by neighbors and Baldwin School staff. The parade route took them from the Baldwin School down Sacramento Street, Mass. Ave, Wendell Street and back to our main building at 20 Sacramento, where we concluded the celebration with a send-off to all the 5th graders.

Enjoy more photos from the first-ever afterschool Pride Parade here: [bit.ly/mlbccprideparade2023](https://bit.ly/mlbccprideparade2023)



## AFTERSCHOOL 2023-24 ENROLLMENT

Enrollment for the 2023-24 school year began on Monday, July 10th. All programs currently have waitlists, but it's not too late to join them! We strongly encourage families to join waitlists as enrollment can change and create openings throughout the school year.

This year, we will continue to offer afterschool programs for Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten and 1st-5th grade, and art programs for 1st-8th grade. For more information about our school year programs, please visit: [bit.ly/mlbcc\\_afterschool](https://bit.ly/mlbcc_afterschool)

Families can join the waitlists online by visiting [agassiz.org](https://agassiz.org) or by contacting Sadun Yapa, Registration Coordinator via email at [registration@agassiz.org](mailto:registration@agassiz.org). We accept childcare vouchers and offer scholarships.



## Living Well Network

### VOLUNTEER FOR THE LIVING WELL NETWORK

In late September the Living Well Network, our program for older adults, will start weekly walks for our community members.

The Monday and Friday walks need volunteer leaders. Leaders will email other participants, gather weekly with other participants and help the group decide where to walk that week, always starting from the same spot.

If interested, email Living Well Network Manager, Kathy Dalton at: [kdalton@agassiz.org](mailto:kdalton@agassiz.org) or call (617) 465-2926.

Learn more about LWN at: [agassiz.org/living-well/](https://agassiz.org/living-well/)

# Community Calendar

## September 2023

**Monday, September 4th**

ABC offices and children's programs closed in observance of Labor Day

**Tuesday, September 5th**

Afterschool Open House

**Wednesday, September 6th**

First day of afterschool, 1st-8th grade

**Thursday, September 7th**

First day of afterschool, Kindergarten

**Tuesday, September 12th**

**7:30-9:00 PM**

BNC Meeting

In-person! Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento St.  
All are welcome, please join us!

The Whistler is published monthly September-June by the Maria L. Baldwin Community Center, distribution 600 in 2022. Call (617) 349-6287 to receive by email or mail. The newsletter is available online at [www.agassiz.org](http://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, Editor; Jessica Leach, Scribe; Ashley Yee, Guest Writer. ABC is located on the traditional homelands of the Massachusetts people, and their close neighbors and relatives, the Nipmuc and Wampanoag.



### The Whistler June / July 2023

Baldwin Neighborhood Council  
Maria L. Baldwin Community Center  
20 Sacramento Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
P: (617) 349-6287 F: (617) 497-4388  
[www.agassiz.org](http://www.agassiz.org), [www.maudmorganarts.org](http://www.maudmorganarts.org)

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@maudmorganarts