the Whistler

Newsletter of the Baldwin Neighborhood Council | December 2023

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BNC News

NOTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 14 BNC MEETING

Harvard Construction Updates

Ann Davis, Senior Mitigation Manager from CSL Consulting, attended the November 14th BNC meeting to share updates on current Harvard University construction projects. In her role as Senior Mitigation Manager, Ms. Davis acts as a liaison between Harvard and the community for any of the university's construction projects.

At the time of the meeting, the current projects in the Baldwin Neighborhood were at 5 Sacramento Street, 60 Oxford Street, and 58 Oxford Street. Ms. Davis shared that 5 Sacramento is largely finished and completing final "punch list" items. She said 60 Oxford Street should be complete in late January with mainly interior work left to do, however there is the possibility that some cranes will be needed on the street.

She also explained that 58 Oxford will need to add generators to the back of the building for a couple of days in mid-December and they are working on obtaining a noise variance from the city. Neighbors on Hammond Street are likely to receive a notice of this variance if it happens.

Skip Schiel, a neighbor on Sacramento Street, asked when 5 Sacramento would be occupied and who would be living there. Ms. Davis answered that 5 Sacramento will be available to lease for Harvard graduate students and affiliates, including faculty and staff. A move-on date is expected in the next few months. She didn't have an exact date for occupancy as of the November 14th meeting.

NEXT BNC MONTHLY MEETING

February 13th, 7:30 PM

ZOOM

AGENDA

- *Next steps for affordable housing at 4 Mellen Street (fka 1627 Mass. Ave.)*
- *BNC Members reflect on the year*

If you have any questions about Harvard University construction projects, contact Mitigation at (617) 496-0857 or mitigation@csl-consulting.com

Wendell Street Updates

Kathy Dalton, Living Well Network Manager filling in as BNC facilitator for Phoebe Sinclair, gave a brief update on construction on Wendell Street. She shared that she spoke with the city liaison and learned that the work is being done on gas line infrastructure by a subcontractor to Eversource. The city liaison reported that the work was taking longer than expected due to labor shortage.

The work will be on pause until mid-April, when there will be more permanent repaving of what was dug up.

Kate Frank asked if it would be possible to advocate for better signage to suggest alternate routes when the work requires the closure of Wendell Street. Ms. Dalton said that she brought this up with the liaison and asked specifically for a signage earlier on Oxford Street before drivers reach Wendell Street.

"They felt it was a reasonable [request]," she explained.

Ms. Dalton also shared that the liaison reported no plans for upcoming plans for other work in the area.

Organization Name Change Updates

In May, our Board of Directors voted to rename our organization Maria L. Baldwin Community Center. At the November 14th BNC meeting, Living Well Network Manager Kathy Dalton provided updates on the process to make the change legal.

Ms. Dalton explained that, according to our organization's bylaws, members of the neighborhood council must vote on the name change and that the MLBCC Board would be convening a group to review the bylaws to complete the legal name change.

In the meantime, she said, the organization will set up a "Doing Business As" to begin using the new name.

"This legal process is extra complicated because the neighborhood council preceded the community center and its board," Kate Frank said. "The structures between these will have to be teased out by someone who knows how to make it legal."

"I'm fundamentally confused between the work of the community center and the neighborhood council," Peggy Kutcher said. "I know that with the challenges through the pandemic, it's changed the amount of time people have available for different things, and how that all gets sorted out is a blur."

Going forward, BNC meeting attendees will be asked to sign in to properly reflect the current membership, which, according to our bylaws, is determined by meeting attendance. Subsequent meeting dates will also be announced each meeting to keep in accordance with the bylaws in preparation for a future vote to legally change the organization's name.

Community

MLBCC ANNUAL APPEAL

In our 53-year history, we've had multiple names and configurations, co-created and celebrated countless neighborhood traditions, and welcomed generations of families to 20 Sacramento Street.

Throughout it all, one thing remains consistent: Change centers our work.

We adjust our approach to community work every year and each season. We respond to you– the families and individuals we serve. With the skills, talents, and awareness of our staff and volunteers, we strive to meet your needs with intention, integrity, and a healthy helping of humor.

2023 was a year of many important changes for us. In January, we added a full time Social Worker to our staff, Silvia Cote, to ensure a consistent, high-quality standard of care across all of our programs. In just 11 months, Silvia's accomplishments have included:

- Preventing 6 evictions
- Providing rental assistance to 12 families
- Supporting 20+ social service applications
- Making 30+ mental health referrals
- Supporting 15 families with intensive, individualized case management and mental health counseling on a regular basis

This spring, we also announced a new leadership model: Co-Executive Directors. This approach builds on fourteen years of close collaboration between our former executive director and our former community liaison. It also mirrors a decades-long partnership with program families, artists, civically engaged residents, Cambridge non-profits, and the City of Cambridge.

Our most public change reflects our anti-racist values. We removed "Agassiz" from our organization's name. In May, our Board of Directors voted to rename us the Maria L. Baldwin Community Center (MLBCC). Her longstanding commitment to education and civic activism strongly aligns with our mission and values.

For nonprofits, one thing that never changes is our gratitude for your continued support. Please consider making a donation of personal significance to help us move boldly ahead, providing vital services so we can continue our journey as a place for learning and growth.

Donate now online by visiting bit.ly/donatetomlbcc or by writing a check to Agassiz Baldwin Community, 20 Sacramento Street.

KIDS ONLY! HOLIDAY SALE AND MAUD'S HANDMADE HOLIDAY MARKET

The 2023 Kids Only! Holiday Sale and Maud's Holiday Market will take place over two days, December 1st from 3:00-6:30 PM and December 2nd from 10:00 AM-3:00 PM (as supplies last), in the studios at Maud Morgan Arts.

Begun in 1986, the Kids Only Holiday Sale

provides an opportunity for school-age children to purchase gifts for family and friends in a safe, supportive and fun environment. Maria L. Baldwin Community Center views this event as an opportunity for children to learn how to use money as well as enjoy the benefits of gift-giving. Individual item prices will be capped at $10.

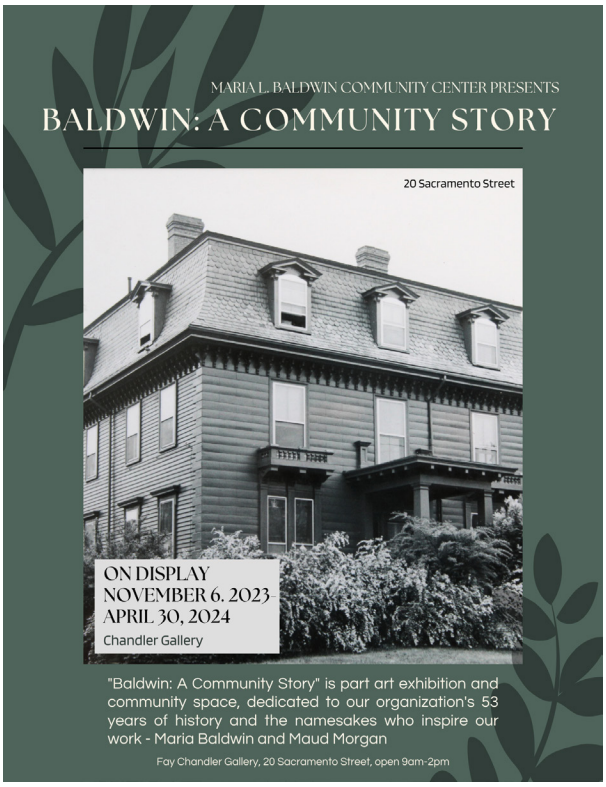
The Kids Only Holiday Sale is open to the general public as well as to children participating in MLBCC programs. Parents, grandparents, guardians, aunts, uncles, cousins – bring the young people in your life! As per our tradition, only children (0-18) and MLBCC staff may enter the sale space, but very young children (0-6) can invite adults to accompany them if they need extra help making a selection.

Proceeds from the sale will support the MLBCC Equity and Access Scholarship Initiative which raises funds allocated for scholarships for our afterschool and summer programs.

While the children shop, adults are invited to enjoy Maud's Handmade Holiday Market. First held in 2019, this market will offer a selection of handmade goods by local artists for excellent holiday gift-giving. Maud's Handmade Holiday Market will run simultaneously with Kids Only Holiday Sale.

When: Friday, December 1st, 3:00-6:30 PM Saturday, December 2nd, 10:00 AM-3:00 PM (as supplies last)

Where: Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento Street



BALDWIN: A COMMUNITY STORY – ON DISPLAY NOVEMBER 6, 2023-APRIL 30, 2024

"Baldwin: A Community Story" is part art exhibition and community space, dedicated to our organization's 53 years of history and the namesakes who inspire our work — Maria L. Baldwin and Maud Morgan. You will be able to visit the show in the Chandler Gallery from November 6th 2023 – April 30th 2024.

In May of 2023 our Board of Directors voted to rename our organization the Maria L. Baldwin Community Center (MLBCC). As we embark on the process to change our name legally, we are taking the opportunity to pause, reflect and celebrate.

Featuring art pieces and historical archives that tell our long and richly layered story, highlights of the exhibition include handmade busts inspired by the likeness of Maud Morgan and Maria Baldwin, created by all of our agency's afterschool students and team members; large scale Polaroid prints

taken by Cambridge's own Elsa Dorfman; as well as antique archives from our own collection; and pieces from our community partners, such as the Baldwin School.

Special thanks to the Cambridge Historical Commission, which assisted us in identifying and dating many of our pieces.

When: Mondays-Fridays 10:00 AM-2:00 PM until April 30, 2024

Where: Chandler Gallery, 1st Floor, 20 Sacramento Street

TAKE A WALK WITH US IN DECEMBER

Would you like to join the Living Well Network on Friday, December 1 and subsequent Fridays for a weekly walk? Get some exercise, fresh air, and meet others. The walks, for older adults 55+ will start and end at our community center at 20 Sacramento Street. Walks will last about an hour and will go at a moderate pace. Baldwin neighborhood resident, artist and naturalist Clare Walker Leslie will be our volunteer leader for the Friday walks.

You can learn more about Clare on her website: http://www.clarewalkerleslie.com

Please help us know how many to expect by signing up here: https://bit.ly/47WnM6z

When: Friday, Dec. 1 and subsequent Fridays, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Where: Meet in front of 20 Sacramento Street

CONSIDER JOINING OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

If you feel a connection to the mission of MLBCC and are looking for meaningful volunteer work, consider joining our Board of Directors. MLBCC 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 MLBCC and provides mission-based leadership and strategic governance. While day-to-day operations are led by the MLBCC Co-Executive Directors (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 MLBCC Board?

- Parents of children in MLBCC Children's Programs or Maud Morgan Arts classes
- Adult participants of Maud Morgan Arts or Living Well Network
- Baldwin Neighborhood residents
- Local business leaders with an interest in community
- Community members committed to the mission of MBLCC 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 MLBCC Board slate is approved annually by the Baldwin Neighborhood Council at the May Annual Meeting. 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 https://bit.ly/mlbcc-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 MLBCC Board might be a good fit for you, contact Co-ED Phoebe Sinclair. She can be reached at psinclair@agassiz.org.

City Wide

OBSERVED AT STAR MARKET IN PORTER SQUARE (OCTOBER 26, 2023)

Prepared by Skip Schiel

I stood waiting in line to check out while the line behind me lengthened. I felt my impatience rising, along with that of others behind me. A woman two customers in front of me was unable to pay because her EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer, or Food Stamps) card failed to complete the transaction. The cashier, a tall man with a strong jutting chin and brush haircut, tried three times to complete the sale. He said, "I can't understand a word you're telling me, your card just doesn't work. Do you have any other way to pay?"

The woman, perhaps in her 60s, stout, looked bewildered. I was nearly close enough to overhear. I thought I heard her speak Russian to the cashier. The woman behind her, in front of me, then began translating. She turned around to me and explained, this woman is from Ukraine. Unable to find a way to pay, the Ukrainian woman unpacked all her food from her large shopping bag. As the two women continued to speak, a woman behind me said, I'll pay for her groceries. Translated from English to Ukrainian or Russian, the Ukrainian woman put her hand over her heart and shook her head no, she wouldn't accept this gift.

The cashier then called the manager, a young Black woman. Helped by the accidental translator, she spoke with the Ukrainian woman who then, smiling, repacked her groceries and left the store. A gift from Porter Square Star/Shaw's market.

CPS PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN LOTTERIES

Prepared by the City of Cambridge

The City of Cambridge, in partnership with Cambridge Public Schools (CPS), announced that applications for the Cambridge Preschool

Program will be accepted beginning Friday, December 1st. The application window for Preschool enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year will span from December 1, 2023 – January 15, 2024. Children are eligible to apply if they are Cambridge residents and will turn 4 years old by August 31, 2024 or 3 years old by August 31, 2024.

Families will be able to begin registering for the Kindergarten Lottery on January 2, 2024. The lottery will close on January 3, 2024. Children are eligible to apply if they are Cambridge residents and will turn 5 years old by August 31, 2024.

PLACE YOUR ORDER FOR FREE AT-HOME COVID-19 TESTS

Prepared by the US Government

As of November 20, residential households in the US are eligible for another order of four free at-home tests from USPS.com.

Each order includes 4 individual rapid antigen COVID-19 tests. For more information about at-home tests, including shelf life and expiration dates, you can visit COVIDTests.gov.

If an order has not been placed for your address since the program reopened on September 25, 2023, you can place two orders now. Orders will ship free.

Visit special.usps.com/testkits and complete the form with your contact and shipping information to order your tests.

WINTER CELEBRATION AND DIAPER DRIVE

Prepared by Rep. Decker's Office

Join Representative Marjorie Decker, 25th Middlesex District House Chair, for a community celebration with coffee, hot cocoa, and donuts. It is suggested to bring a box of diapers to donate to Cambridge Community Center and Transition House.

When: December 9, 2023 10-11:30 AM
Where: Raymond Park, 106 Raymond Street
RSVP: marjorie.decker@mahouse.gov, (617) 722-2130

Community Calendar
December 2023

Friday, December 1st	**3:00-6:30 PM**	Kids Only Holiday Sale and Maud's Handmade Holiday Market, Day 1
Saturday December 2nd	**10 AM-3:30 PM**	Kids Only Holiday Sale and Maud's Handmade Holiday Market, Day 2
Thursday, December 7th		Hanukkah begins at sundown
Monday, December 25th & Tuesday, December 26th		Maria L. Baldwin Community Center office and programs closed for Christmas and winter holidays
Tuesday, December 26th		Kwanzaa holiday begins

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DO NOT FORWARD

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