

# M-C News

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
AND THE LONGFELLOW NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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## Broadway Site Picked For Library Expansion MCNA set to engage neighborhood

On December 11, 2000, the City Council voted 7-2 to expand and renovate the current Main Library on Broadway, ending a six-year process of decision making. Now that the siting is finalized, the council has requested the city manager to bring forward a loan authorization for the cost of the library program on the Broadway location. Selection of an architect to design the 90,000-square-foot library addition will follow shortly.

As the project moves ahead, the MCNA would like to engage the neighborhood in discussing shared concerns over the implications of the library expansion project on the neighborhood. A February 7 meeting at 7:00 PM in the Longfellow School Cafeteria (see box at right) has been set to begin the process of outlining what issues the MCNA should focus on.

### A Tale of Two Sites

After evaluating a number of sites over late spring and early fall, the final deliberations of the City Council highlighted two distinct views on how best to meet the needs of Cambridge residents. One final option under consideration was the building of a totally new 94,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility in the heart of Central Square at 65 Prospect Street, currently a parking lot. The second option under final consideration was the expansion and renovation of the current Main Library to about 90,000 square feet at 449 Broadway.

With the renovation of the interior of the existing Main Library, it will be necessary to relocate and close it for a period of time during construction.

While Councilors Marjorie Decker, Jim Braude, Kathy Born and Henrietta Davis have supported the Central Square site, in the final vote, all of the councilors except Braude and Davis voted for the Broadway site.

Proponents of the Broadway site pointed to: the positive long-term benefits of having a state-of-the-art library next to the high school, overall lower cost of the project as the city already owns the land on which the expansion will take place, and the tradition of having 'a library in the park' as some of their reasons for favoring the Broadway site.

Proponents of the Central Square site pointed to: its location in the heart of the city with excellent accessibility by public transportation, the extra space available, the ability to build from scratch a totally new facility, and preservation of the high school campus, which will be permanently altered and temporarily disrupted by several years of construction, as some of the reasons they favor the Central Square site.

In recognition of the concern over the implications to the high school, the City Council asked that the Superintendent of Schools (or her designee) be included on a Library Design Advisory and Construction Committee. Among the goals for the committee are to

### MCNA Neighborhood Meeting

The next MCNA meeting will focus on how the expansion of the main library will impact our neighborhood and the adjoining park. Residents of our neighborhood have an important role to play in shaping the project's impact on what most would agree is the heart of our neighborhood.

**Date:** Wednesday, February 7

**Time:** 7 to 9:30 P.M.

**Place:** Longfellow School, 359 Broadway.

Please use the cafeteria entrance in the courtyard.

More information about the library project and the park will be provided at the meeting.

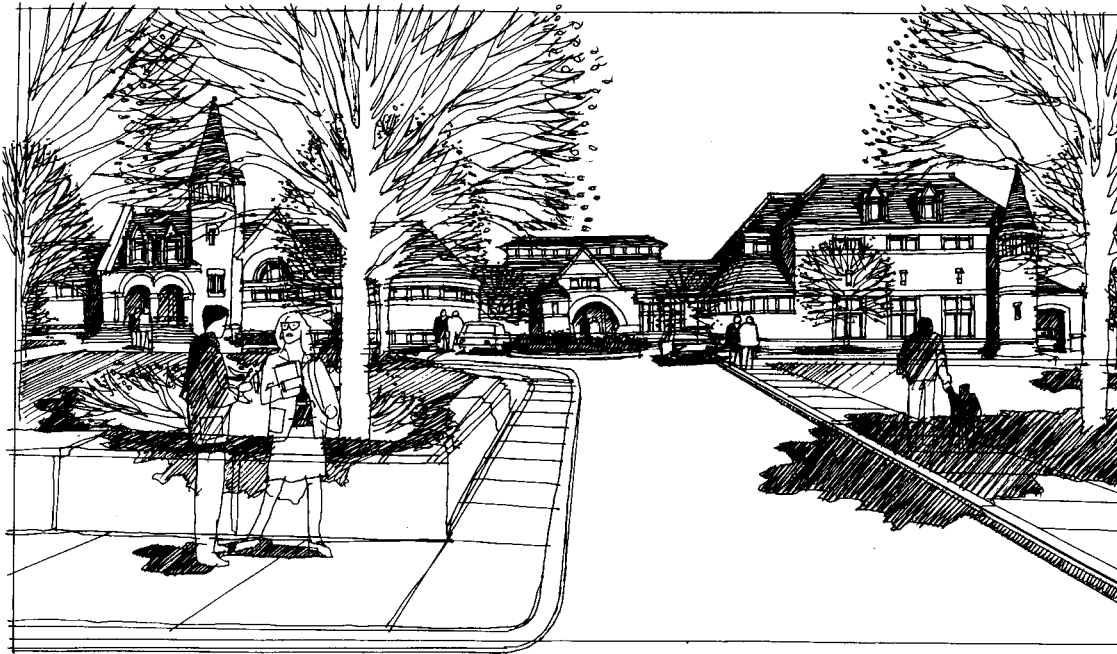
fully integrate the existing CRLS buildings into a new campus plan, and allow and encourage full access to the library during the school day for CRLS students and staff.

Additionally, the council asked the city manager to develop a plan for improved transportation options for residents going to and from the Main Library.

### Construction Timeline

Based on material presented by City Manager Robert Healy, it will take about 3.5-4 years to design and complete construction. This timeline breaks down as follows: 3.5 months to select a design team, 18 months for design development including obtaining all permits, 3 months to select a contractor, and 18-24 months to construct the library addition. It is unclear how this schedule will overlap with Harvard's construction (Continued on Page 2)

# Broadway Library To Be Renovated, Expanded



A view of the Main Library with its new addition, as seen from Broadway at Trowbridge Street.

(Sketch courtesy of Carlone & Associates Architecture)

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tion of the Knafel Center on nearby Cambridge Street.

The permitting process in this situation is unique in that the Cambridge Public Library is currently subject to several levels of historic preservation review. Since 1982, the library has been individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which makes the project subject to review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Additionally, the library is also located in the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District. Publicly owned structures and structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places, such as the library, that are in the District are subject to binding review by the M-C Conservation District Commission.

## Open Space Lost

It is currently anticipated that between 9,200 and 11,200 square feet of open space could be permanently lost as a result of the siting on the Broadway campus. It is estimated that the cost of acquiring land to replace this open space would be between \$1-\$1.68 million. Additionally, a subsequent review of the high-level schematic indicated that it might be advantageous to move the footprint of the library expansion an additional 20-25 feet closer to Broadway and farther away from the high school's Art wing, taking still more open space. In the end, until final plans are drawn, it is hard to know the precise amount of open space that will be lost.

It is also expected that the recently refurbished Tot Lot on the library grounds will need to be closed and relocated as part of the expansion program.

On the heels of the successful effort involving the MCNA, Cambridge Health Alliance and the city in the recent renovation/expansion of the hospital, the MCNA Coordinating Committee is hopeful that residents of our neighborhood, working through our association, have an important role to play in shaping the project's impact on what most would agree is the heart of our neighborhood.

## Best-Loved Building

The library-park complex is by far the most-used and best loved public space in Mid-Cambridge. It includes our only public library and our only public open space larger than a house lot. The library structure is also probably the single best-loved building in the neighborhood.

Six years ago, near the start of the library project, these strong feelings for the library and the park led to a deep division of the association's membership. Since then, the association has not attempted to take a position on the library siting. However, now that the siting decision has been made, it is time to put that division behind us and advocate for making the final result as good as possible for our neighborhood.

## The MCNA's Role

How will our neighborhood's voice be heard? The Coordinating Committee believes that it should be the goal of the MCNA that there be an opportunity for the neighborhood to have formal, direct input into the project. We look forward to hearing your thoughts at our Feb. 7 meeting on the process and the issues that you would like to have the MCNA bring forward.

## MCNA Gala Celebrates 25th Anniversary

In 1975, neighbors from across Mid-Cambridge came together and founded the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association. On the evening of Sunday, October 22, 2000, MCNA celebrated the 25th anniversary of its founding in an event at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School attended by over 100 members of the association.

Attendees enjoyed a great variety of refreshments contributed by Broadway Market, Carberry's Bakery, East Coast Grill, Johnny's Foodmaster, Johnny's Luncheonette, Jae's Café, Leo's Place, Picante Mexican Grill, S&S Delicatessen, Star Market and Starbucks, with flowers by Coady

Florist, while listening to a live musical performance by Jacques Chenier and Jeff Galindo, sponsored by the Longfellow Neighborhood Council. All extra food was donated to the CASPAR Shelter on Albany Street at the end of the evening.

The highlights of the evening were a special performance by Mid-Cambridge native and satirist **Jimmie Tingle**, and the presentation of certificates of appreciation for service to the neighborhood. Jimmie Tingle recounted his high school days here with much humor and also actively campaigned for president, offering a superior choice to either of the two candidates then running for the office.

MCNA President **John Pitkin** presented 13 Awards for Neighborhood Service at the event to:

**Sara Mae Berman**, for service on the School Committee and advocacy for the neighborhood and its children during the construction of Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

**Rick Colbath-Hess**, for leadership in organizing the Paine Park Association and block parties.

**Bill Craig**, for ably and steadfastly representing neighbors in negotiations over expansion of The Cambridge Hospital and for service on the MCNA Coordinating Committee.

Former **Mayor Francis Duehay**, for the advice and support he gave the MCNA in its early years and for being a steadfast supporter of the MCNA on the City Council for almost all of its 25 years.

**Penelope Kleespies**, for dedicated and extraordinarily able leadership of the Longfellow Community School.

**Frankie Lieberman**, for ably serving on the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission and for service on the MCNA Coordinating Committee.

**George and Jane Metzger**, for co-organizing the Antrim St. block party for 24 years, for service on many neighborhood committees, and George for service on the MCNA Coordinating Committee.

**Tony Platt**, for creative leadership on the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conser-

vation District Commission and the Inman Square Improvement Association (awarded posthumously).

**Gus Rancatore**, for donating Toscanini's tasty ice cream to the annual July MCNA Ice Cream Social.

**Jane and Bob Richards**, for co-organizing the Antrim Street block party for 24 years, for service on many neighborhood committees, and Bob for service on the MCNA Coordinating Committee.

**Hugh Russell**, for able service to the entire city as a member of the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Planning Board, and for serving on the first MCNA Coordinating Committee.

**Keren Schlomy**, for energetic and able leadership of the Neighborhood Stewardship Task Force and for service on the MCNA Coordinating Committee.

**Francis Spinks**, for leadership and advocacy for the creation and design of the Mid-Cambridge City Park, now called Joan Lorentz Park, and for serving on the first MCNA Coordinating Committee.

The MCNA Coordinating Committee then presented a special award to president **John Pitkin** for the numerous and valuable contributions he has made in his many years at the helm of the association. Here's looking forward to the next 25 years!

## Recent M-C Conservation District Commission Cases

Construction has begun at **49/49a Trowbridge Street**, where developer Guy Asaph is altering the original front-facing Italianate house, adding a rear addition onto it, and building two additional multi-family dwellings on the rear of the property.

Over the course of several meetings, the Mid-Cambridge Conservation District Commission heard much testimony about the project, from the developer, architect, and abutters. At first many neighbors opposed the project, most notably for the potential danger to the many mature trees and root systems posed by construction. Other issues were excessive infill and massing.

After concerns were expressed about another existing house in the rear lot and the need to develop the entire property at one time, the developer returned a final time to present his final plans: Four new units in the front building; four units in a second new building; two in the existing two-family at the rear; and two in

another new building at the rear. Several design changes were made to accommodate the Commission and abutters, as well as agreements on landscaping, driveway materials and tree protection, to name a few. In the end, the Commission voted 4-1 to approve the project, with several conditions.

One of the Commission's other recent cases was the approval of a non-binding review of an Italianate house at **23 Lee Street**. The proposal would decrease the number of rear garages, remove and enlarge a two-story ell, plus make landscaping improvements, along with other plans to restore the exterior. The Commission approved the project unanimously with gratitude to the owners for their willingness to enhance the streetscape with such a glorious plan.

Plans are also underway to fill a vacant position on the commission left by Nassir Ghaemi, who resigned several months ago.

### NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

**Wednesday, February 7, 7-9:30 PM** MCNA Meeting, Longfellow School, corner of Broadway and Fayette Streets. Please enter via the cafeteria door in the courtyard. See story on Page 1 for agenda details.

**Tuesday, March 6** Cambridge Rindge and Latin School Camp Night. Come and get information about summer camps. Call 349-6260 for more info.

**Sunday, March 11** Longfellow School Annual Cabin Fever Reliever Potluck Brunch. Call 349-6260 for more info.

**Wednesday, May 9** MCNA annual meeting. Agenda details, to be outlined in the next newsletter, include election of the Coordinating Committee. A few vacancies exist, so anyone who is interested in becoming a Coordinating Committee member is encouraged to contact Martha Osler at 864-2668.

**M-C NEWS**  
P.O. Box 907  
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**NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING**  
**February 7**