

M-C News

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

Vol. 15, No. 2

May, 2006

Annual meeting topics: M-C oral history, library, parking, and more

The May 17 annual meeting will start with a keynote presentation about the Mid-Cambridge Oral History Project currently underway. MCNA newsletter editor Paula Lovejoy commends this event to you: "The oral history is such a great project. Longfellow Council director Penny Kleespies is heading it up, and Sarah Boyer of the historical commission—she's an Antrim Street resident—is a great speaker, very knowledgeable and entertaining." Boyer has authored three oral histories of Cambridge.

Coordinating Committee election: During the business meeting, we will elect the 11 members of the MCNA Coordinating Committee, who will serve for one-year terms organizing the work of the association. Continuing members include David Szlag, Doane Perry, Frankie Lieberman, George Bossarte, Joan Pickett, John Pitkin, Sam Seidel and Tuny McMahan. New nominees are Chantal Eide, Chris Robinson and Elizabeth Gombosi, who has previously served on the committee.

We thank retiring members Kate Vrijmoet, Cathy

MCNA to consider 2nd resolution on use of the Longfellow building

The neighborhood remains highly interested in the city's long-range plans for the Longfellow building. At the May 17 annual MCNA meeting, members will be asked to help us update the principles for use of the Longfellow School building that were adopted in 2003 when the elementary school closed its doors.

The Longfellow Community School space, together with the Longfellow gym and courtyard and side playgrounds, served our neighborhood as a de facto community center for decades. There are no other such facilities in the area. Therefore, the Association, with our sister organization, the Longfellow Neighborhood Council, has a strong interest in the future use of the Longfellow. We are concerned and take responsibility

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Annual Meeting Agenda

Please plan to attend the MCNA Annual Meeting, from 7-9 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17, at the Cambridge Rindge & Latin School Media Cafeteria. The entrance is on the Cambridge Street side underneath the overpass.

- Mid-Cambridge Oral History Project
- Cambridge Public Library expansion update;
- Election of MCNA Coordinating Committee;
- Vote on proposed policy banning curb cuts for parking in front yards;
- Designating Joan Lorentz Park as a park
- MCNA's recommendations regarding future uses of the Longfellow School building.

Edgerly and Frances Donovan.

Library project: Alan Burne, director of the main library redevelopment project, will give an update on the city's plans for the main library restoration and expansion project. Currently he is "working with the architect to re-bid the project in June/July with a construction start in September." After only one general contractor (Daniel O'Connell's Sons) bid on the project in February, city officials decided to re-bid the work. This summer Burne hopes to do some of the utility work around the high school's side entrance.

Joan Lorentz Park: Sam Seidel will report on the Coordinating Committee's effort to strengthen the park designation of Joan Lorentz Park, which State Reps. Alice Wolf and Tim Toomey are helping with.

Longfellow future: MCNA president Doane Perry will ask members to update the principals for future uses of the Longfellow School building which the Association adopted in 2003. Since then, the building has become the home of the Extension High School and the interim Main Library. The Longfellow Neighborhood Council has remained in the building.

Front-yard parking: John Pitkin and Doane Perry will lead a discussion and vote on a resolution from the most recent Association neighborhood meeting to address the rash of illegal front yard parking that threatens the qualities of the neighborhood (see article, Page 2).

Residents to take stand on parking in front yards

Several Cambridge property owners have recently taken to solving their parking problem by paving and parking in their front yards. Because this degrades the quality of our neighborhoods, depresses property values and raises serious health and safety risks, Cambridge has enacted ordinances forbidding parking within a specified distance of the property line and imposing strict limitations on the granting of curb cuts.

At the January MCNA meeting, city planner Les Barber of Community Development discussed the front yard parking problem and outlined the ordinances prohibiting it (parking in front yards is permitted only if the owner has a variance).

Barber noted that enforcement rests with Inspectional Services, but the help of all residents is needed to bring violations to their attention so enforcement action can be taken.

Neighborhood yard sales, parties slated for June 10

Mark June 10 as the date for the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood multiple yard sales. Last year three blocks, Antrim (the granddaddy of all Mid-Cambridge block sales at 30 years old!), Leonard, and Ellery Streets joined together for a day-long sale and block parties following the close of the yard sale.

It would be great if we could add several more blocks as sponsors of this event. The more blocks that have yard sales, the more buyers we can entice to Mid-Cambridge, and the more successful the event will be. Besides, this is a great way to empty a closet, meet new neighbors, and catch up on neighborhood news.

As part of its block sale last year, Ellery Street featured a MCNA Charity Table where everyone interested donated items with the proceeds going to CAF (Cambridge Action Fund). The Coordinating Committee has approved Cambridge Housing Assistance Fund as the recipient of proceeds from our 2006 table. We hope that other blocks will be interested in participating in this effort.

For this to be a truly neighborhood yard sale, more blocks need to join the endeavor. Anyone interested in volunteering as a "block coordinator" can sign up at the annual meeting on May 17 or, even better, sign up now by emailing or calling Tuny McMahon at 617-495-4440 or tunymcm@comcast.net.



An SUV parked in front of 37 Irving Street is a recent example of new front yard parking.

A formal motion (see text below) will be offered at MCNA's Annual Meeting on May 17 to seek membership support for the city's program to prevent this practice, to order corrective action where the ordinances have been violated, and to urge the Board of Zoning Appeals and other Cambridge governing bodies to uphold these important ordinances and to deny any variances except in the most extreme situations.

Two recent Mid-Cambridge examples of new front yard parking are at 9 Roberts Road and 37 Irving Street, pictured above.

Proposed MCNA resolution on front yard parking

The text of the proposed resolution is as follows:

Whereas cars parked in the front yard setbacks of houses are a blight on the streetscape and the quality of our neighborhood,

Resolved that the membership of the MCNA opposes zoning variances and curb cuts to legalize and facilitate parking in front yard setbacks, and

Resolved that MCNA members and other Mid-Cambridge residents are encouraged to bring this resolution to the attention of the Board of Zoning Appeals and other city bodies in connection with future applications for variances, and

Resolved that the MCNA President and Coordinating Committee are to reference this opposition in all communications to city bodies regarding variances and curb cuts sought for parking spaces within front yard setbacks in Mid-Cambridge.

Neighborhood News briefs

Joan Lorentz Park gets on the map

MCNA President Doane Perry emailed map publisher Hedberg Maps requesting they revise the name from Library Park to Joan Lorentz Park and received the following reply on March 19 from Nat Case, head of production: "Thank you for your email message. We will note this in correcting future maps that name this park."

MCNA seeks Web site volunteer

MCNA needs a volunteer to keep the handsome Web site www.mcna.org updated. The requirements include posting the newsletter pdf that is prepared by the newsletter editor 3-4 times a year and the event notices that are prepared by the president usually monthly. If interested, please contact Doane Perry at 617-868-7082 or doaneperry@yahoo.com.

Please provide MCNA with your email

We would like to be able to send all 600+ members information more easily. To join our list, please send an email to membership secretary George Bossarte at gbeng@world.std.com. Our policy is to not divulge member email addresses to anyone. You will continue to receive the newsletter by 'snail mail' even if we have your email.

Ice Cream Social

The annual and fabulous Ice Cream Social is scheduled for 6-8 p.m. on Wednesday, June 28 (rain date June 29) at Joan Lorentz Park. Come enjoy delicious Toscanini's ice cream donated by its maker, Gus Rancatore of Inman Street.

MCNA sign post restoration project

Many of the wonderful red MCNA sign posts are rotting at the bottom and need restoration or renovation. If you would like to join the project, please contact Frankie

Lieberman at 617-492-1335 or frankiehues@earthlink.net.

Prospect Street redesign

The city of Cambridge is seeking more input from the community regarding the redesign of Prospect Street, including the pedestrian environment, land use, and other issues. See www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/cp/zng/prospect or contact Jeff Roberts at 617-349-4639 or jroberts@cambridgema.gov.

'Park Days' features dessert, music

Bring a pot-luck dessert to Hancock Park for a series of enjoyable summer evenings of family entertainment, from 6-8 p.m. on the following Thursdays:

June 22 - Banjoes and bones, Rudin and Sedgwick;

June 29 - Anna Maughan, flute duo;

July 13 - Marie Fukuda, a classical trio;

July 20 - Jazz evening with Jacques Chanier;

July 27 - The Hammond family: folk songs with Lorraine and Bennett Hammond.

Sara Mae Berman, marathon pioneer

There was a great article about member Sara Mae Berman as Boston Marathon pioneer in the April 16 Boston Sunday Globe. See it at http://www.boston.com/sports/specials/marathon/articles/2006/04/16/feet_first/

Inman Square Business Assn.

invites MCNA members

Mara Kustra, co-president of the Inman Square Business Association, invites MCNA members to come to its meetings, which the ISBA holds about every three weeks, to get to know each other and to work together on a greater Inman Square and surrounding area. Meeting information is listed in the Business Association section of their website, www.inmansquare.com. They look forward to seeing you!

Neighbors weigh in on future of the Longfellow building

(Continued from Page 1)

for this school building in our neighborhood.

Our neighborhood extends between Harvard, Central, and Inman Squares and is home to 12,000 people, including over 1,000 children under age 18, and two school facilities, Cambridge Rindge & Latin and the Longfellow.

Longfellow guidelines

In October 2003 the Association approved a set of guiding principles for future use of the building:

1. In recognition of the neighborhood's already tight parking situation, tie adequate parking to the use of the building and encourage non-parking intensive use.

2. Keep the building in the public domain: the

building should not be sold to private developers.

3. Continue and encourage city-wide community-centered uses for the building.

4. Preserve some section of the building for Mid-Cambridge community programs/ space.

5. Mixed use of the building would be acceptable and possibly encouraged (e.g., a community center in the west wing and affordable housing in the east).

6. No reduction in open space, including the basketball court and tot lots. Additional recreational space should be considered.

7. No increase in the building's volume should be considered.

Good Neighbor Awards recognize M-C quality of life

The Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association is establishing the "Good Neighbor Awards" program to recognize those individuals, organizations or institutions that have contributed to the welfare and general improvement of the Mid-Cambridge area.

Nominations for these awards can be contributed by any member of the MCNA. The recipients will be chosen by the MCNA Coordinating Committee on an annual basis. The 2006 award will be presented at the annual Ice Cream Social gathering of the Association.

The award will be a certificate, plaque or emblem to be chosen by the Coordinating Committee, which welcomes design suggestions from members.

By instituting these awards, the MCNA hopes to encourage activities that realize our organization's goals for improving the quality of life and environment in the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood.

To nominate a person or organization for the 2006 Good Neighbor Award, please provide the following information:

--Nominee's name, organization or institution [if any], address, phone and email [if any]

--What activities has the nominee done to improve the quality of life and of the environment of the neighborhood?

--What has the nominee done to contribute to the welfare and general improvement of the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood?

--Any other relevant information.

--Nominator's address, phone and email

Please send the nomination to MCNA Membership Secretary George Bossarte so that it will arrive by May 22--either by mail to 4 Antrim Street, Cambridge 02139 or by email to gbeng@world.std.com.

NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

Wednesday, May 17, 7-9 p.m., MCNA Annual Meeting, at Cambridge Rindge & Latin School, media cafeteria, 459 Broadway. For complete agenda, see Page 1 of this newsletter.

Monday, May 8, 7 p.m., Doris and Chester Mitchell of the S&S Restaurant will share their memories of the early years of the S&S and their family's life on Fayette Street. Held at the Longfellow Council Office, upstairs from the library in the Longfellow School building, 359 Broadway. For more info call 617-349-6260.

Wednesday June 28 (rain date June 29), MCNA Ice Cream Social, 6 to 8 p.m. Free Toscanini's ice cream at Joan Lorentz Park, Broadway at Ellery Street.

The M-C News is published by the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association and the Longfellow Neighborhood Council. *Editor:* Paula Lovejoy. *Reporters:* George Bossarte, Elizabeth Gombosi, Frankie Lieberman, Joan Pickett, Doane Perry, John Pitkin, Sam Seidel, David Szlag. The MCNA does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

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Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 17