

# M-C News

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

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## Youville House/MCNA partnership proposed

Right in the heart of Mid-Cambridge is Youville House--a private, nonprofit assisted living residence that many of us have never visited! If you did you would be delighted by the energy of the residents and the happy "buzz" generated in the halls, the common areas and dining room.

We have talked often about how Mid-Cambridge could institute a Beacon Hill Village-type of outreach program that would help those of us who want to stay in our own homes even as we become less able to manage the details of at-home residency.

Through conversations the MCNA Coordinating Committee has had recently with Youville House, we have an opportunity to investigate a partnership with this prestigious group that could help us establish such a program. Nothing can, should or will happen overnight, but understanding the problems and discussing the possibilities with professionals at Youville House can go a long way toward developing

## M-C board poised to OK infill townhouse

The Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission (MCNDC) has tentatively approved construction of a new house in the backyard of 378 Broadway, although the final design was still undetermined as of this newsletter's press time.

Owners Roderick MacFarquhar and Guy Asaph had requested permission to build one or two townhouses behind the present 1870s Mansard-style house that faces the street (such construction is termed "infill"). In their initial proposal presented to the board on March 7, the Mansard would remain a single-family home; the garage would be removed, and one townhouse would be constructed. The townhouse would be 2900 square feet, with 700 of the square feet in the basement.

At issue with this request was excess infill of the area. The backyard of the present house has two nearly 100-year-old oak trees, and green space. Neighbors mentioned how this area is the last green  
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a suitable program for our neighbors.

To tell us more about this important facility, the possibilities open to us and to encourage participation in its activities, Ildiko Szabo, Youville's director of marketing and community relations, will talk to members at the MCNA annual meeting on May 16. This can be the start of a dynamic relationship between the larger MCNA family and the Youville House community. You'll want to hear what Ildiko has to say so don't miss the May 16 meeting! Youville House is located at 1573 Cambridge St.

## MCNA annual meeting tackles diverse topics

***Bar hours, aging in place, park issues and block parties are on the agenda***

The Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association Annual Meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 16, from 7 to 9 p.m. in the media cafeteria at Cambridge Rindge & Latin School, 459 Broadway.

The agenda includes the election of the slate of members of the association's Coordinating Committee, plus announcements of upcoming events, and discussion of current issues, listed below. Guest speakers include representatives from the city Planning Board, library expansion project, Youville House, Cambridge Hospital, and a state senatorial aide.

- Main Library expansion project update;
- Presentation of the annual Mid-Cambridge Good Neighbor Award;
- Resident participation in city government, fixing the public notice system, the criteria of city boards and the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission;
- Youville House offers neighborhood resources and retiring in place;
- Cambridge Hospital's annual assessment of its relationship to the M-C community;
- Bar closing hours;
- Yard sales and block parties;
- Joan Lorentz Park designation petition;
- War Memorial renovation update;
- Website event and hearing notices;
- Green issues and organizations;
- Prospect Street renovations and rezoning.

# Library construction begins in earnest

The library project construction is underway in earnest. Construction manager Alan Burne reports that the job site now staffs over 50 persons and drilling for the foundation of the library addition and the new underground storm water retention tank is roughly 35 percent complete.

Fifty-four of the roughly 150 holes required have been drilled. Drilling is expected to continue until the end of June, provided soil conditions are good and no obstructions are encountered. The relatively quiet drilling operations are interrupted by a loud metal clanking sound. This noise is due to the drilling equipment being "shaken" to remove the soil stuck on the augers.

Excavation work for the garage and library foundations has also begun, and will continue through the end of September. During peak excavation mode, the construction plan calls for 50 truckloads per day leaving the site. Concrete operations will be continuous as well.

Wheel-washing of vehicles leaving the site and street sweeping will continue throughout the foundation and associated excavation work. The rodent control program, which was started at the beginning of March, continues with weekly baiting and checking of traps. It will be in place until excavation is completed and then will be repeated every six months or as otherwise required.

The laying of the 36-inch diameter pipe inlet pipe for the 350,000-gallon storm water tank has begun. It will terminate in the sidewalk near the tennis court on Ellery Street until the final connection is made to the DPW's storm water project line sometime in 2009.

## Ellery Street closing

Along with the drain line, a 6-inch sewer line will be placed and connected to the Ellery Street sanitary sewer during the second week of May. The connection should take two days. Ellery Street will be open to residents only. Design requirements for the storm water drain line necessitate that the line be 20 feet below grade. The use of larger equipment capable of extending to that depth means that it is unlikely that all the Austrian pine trees adjacent to the tennis court fence can be saved. An arborist will trim the pines to provide room. If replacements are required, they will be made at the earliest possible time. The fir trees on the southern side of the sidewalk will be protected and saved.

The construction fence will be shifted toward Broadway to provide room until these lines are completed.

Interior demolition of the 1967 library wing continues in preparation for its complete demolition as soon as school closes for the summer. Removal of sand-

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## Rodents, noise, dirt and dust are part of the massive library construction project

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stone, such as the exterior window frames, has begun in order to be recycled as repair pieces for restoring the historic building. Protection of the woodwork and WPA murals is ongoing in the historic library.

Burne said only two complaints have been made to date regarding dust and rodents. Neighbors have noted they appreciate the green construction fencing and the construction progress photos on the library's Web site (<http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/CPL/booksandmortar/bandm.html>) and have also requested more specific information about planned construction activities.

Burne will attend the Annual MCNA Meeting May 16 to provide a progress report and answer neighbors' questions.

## M-C commission OKs Broadway townhouse

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area left, and infilling it with even one dwelling would impact the need for open space. This backyard is regarded as a neighborhood feature.

At a March 7 hearing, MCNCDC chairman Steve Cohen said the Commission has no regulations that would allow them to deny this townhouse as "excess infill," as there is no impact on the public viewing from the street, and the proposed height is not higher than the 35 feet allowed by zoning. The board asked Mr. Asaph to construct a model of the proposed home and the surrounding neighborhood, and return April 9 for further discussion.

On April 9 the MCNCDC gave a tentative green light for one townhouse of about 2,200 square feet, reducing the zoning size allotment by one-third, according to Sarah Burks of the MCNCDC staff.

A special "architectural discussion" took place on April 23 to discuss other designs for the townhouse that would permit more "blue sky/open space" designs. Ms. Burks said the commission suggested a "more stylistic, modern" design for the townhouse, rather than a replication of the mansard house in front.

At its next meeting on May 7, Mr. Asaph is scheduled to bring a revised house plan for the board's consideration. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. at the McCusker Center, Broadway, Second floor Meeting Room.

## Neighborhood happenings

### Dessert and jazz in the summertime

Neighbors are invited to share a potluck dessert and hear music by local jazz groups on six Thursday evenings this summer at Hancock Park at Hancock and Centre Streets.

The Longfellow Potluck Desserts series lineup is as follows: June 21, Flute and clarinet performance; June 28 TBA (probably a recorder trio); July 12, Banjos and Bones; July 19, Jazz evening; and July 26, The Hammonds. All run from 6 to 8 p.m.

This free program is presented by the Longfellow Neighborhood Council. For more info, contact Penelope Kleespies at 617-349-6260.

### Yard Sale set for June 9

Are you ready? Are you willing? Please say yes and let's make this year's Neighborhood Yard Sale the best ever! Saturday, June 9 is the day (rain date is June 10) and once again MCNA will be sponsoring the CHAF (Cambridge Housing Assistance Fund) table where all proceeds will go to this important fund which supports housing for homeless and near homeless families and individuals.

In order to make this event the smashing success we anticipate, we need not only sunny skies but volunteer block coordinators to organize their blocks around this idea. There will be a table at the May 16 Annual meeting where you can sign up to join the effort. MCNA will support the Big Sale with advertising in the Cambridge Chronicle and Globe, posters around the entire neighborhood, Craig's List postings and anything else we can

think of to build enthusiasm for our sale.

So come on and volunteer! You'll make lots of new friends, maybe make a few dollars yourself on stuff you don't need, support a good cause and in the process have a lot of fun. If you just can't wait til May 16 to sign up, call Tuny McMahon at 617-945-4440 or email her at [tunymcm@comcast.net](mailto:tunymcm@comcast.net). If you want to donate items, bring them over to the CHAF table front of 55 Ellery St. the morning of the sale.

### Summer Fling at Youville

Youville House will hold its third annual Summer Fling on June 27 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the courtyard of the Youville Lifecare Campus. The Mood Swings, an all-women swing band with members from Cambridge, will entertain and all present will be dancing, tapping their toes or just plain enjoying an old fashioned get-together. Refreshments will be served. Neighbors are invited join in the fun and see what makes Youville House move! Inquiries at (617) 491-1234; ask for Ellen or Ildiko.

### Neighborhood Green group

Some mid-Cambridge residents would like to start a local neighborhood Green group. We'd like to find effective ways to reduce carbon emissions in our homes and neighborhood, and work with like-minded people to promote large-scale change.

If you would like to participate in a mid-Cambridge green group, please contact us at [mcna@greencambridge.org](mailto:mcna@greencambridge.org) (preferred), call Paula Lovejoy at 617-876-0884, or write MCNA at PO Box 380907, Cambridge, MA 02238.

## Prospect Street rezoning aims to spruce up street's image

The Cambridge Planning Board on March 20 recommended that the City Council approve its petition to amend the Prospect Street area zoning. The council will take up this item on April 17 and have final action on May 14.

The area of concern is a 100-foot-wide strip on either side of Prospect Street from Bishop Allen Drive to the Somerville line. Within this overlay zone, future development of more than 2,000 square feet in the business districts would require a public meeting and non-binding consultation with city staff. Also required would be (1) a new 3-foot front yard setback (if none had existed); (2) a 15% open space requirement in business districts; (3) a 7-foot landscaped buffer between grade parking and the public sidewalk, and (4) new building designs and guidelines and site design to improve the street's image and the pedestrian experience.

Present densities, uses and heights within this corridor would not change. At present residential

areas require a 30% minimum green/open space area, so the 15% open space would be for new business space. Open space is identified as expanded sidewalk width for pedestrian use or any landscaping that would benefit the pedestrian experience. Any new development must have a new or existing tree on the sidewalk or within 10 feet of the sidewalk for every 25 feet of frontage along Prospect Street.

The 3-foot area between a building and the public sidewalk should be landscaped (trees encouraged) or could be an expanded width of the sidewalk, but should be devoted to pedestrian use only. Garages performing repair work shall screen parked vehicles from neighbors and the street and repairs done within a building.

When asked about the status of the Whole Foods Market on Prospect Street, the Planning Board stated that no existing structures and uses are affected by the overlay zoning.

## City Council continues push to ease liquor policies

The shift to a less restrictive city policy on liquor and other licenses has continued in the past few months.

The City Council voted April 9 to set up a CAP Policy Working Group to evaluate the city's liquor license CAP policy. In view of the council's recent push to relax this policy that has been in effect since the early 1980s, the apparent purpose of this committee is to provide legal justification for a new, less restrictive policy.

The committee was originally to be comprised of 10 members who are either city employees or represent business interests, with just one citizen representative. In April, the council improved the balance slightly when it passed an order by Councilor Craig Kelley to include "at least two members of the public who have no financial or bureaucratic interest in the current policy or any changes to it." The city manager will appoint all members of the committee.

At least one Mid-Cambridge resident, Doug Myers, has applied to serve on the committee, although the

Harvard Square Defense Fund, long the leading advocate for the CAP policy, is boycotting it.

In February, the License Commission granted Harvard University permission to serve liquor to affiliates of the university in the basement of Memorial Hall. The new pub is named the Queen's Head after the public house in London that was the source of the family money that John Harvard gave to establish the university. Though the name may have a long history, the policy of serving liquor to students on campus on a regular basis is new.

Another change toward a less restrictive license policy in Harvard Square is now in the offing. The International House of Pancakes on Eliot Street is applying to extend its hours of operation to close at 4 a.m. instead of the current 2 a.m. Although this does not involve alcohol, it would continue the trend toward more late-night activity started by the granting of 2 a.m. closing times to The Cellar and the Plough & Stars pub in Mid-Cambridge.

The License Commission will hold a public hearing on the IHOP application at 6 p.m. on May 8 at 831 Massachusetts Ave.

### NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

**Saturday, May 5, Plant Swap.** 10 a.m. till 1 p.m. Bring a plant or cuttings to swap to Fayette Park (off Fayette St. across from the Longfellow School).

**Monday, May 7, Hearing on 378 Broadway townhouse proposal,** 6 p.m., at M-C District Conservation Commission, McCusker Center, 2nd floor Community Meeting Room, 344 Broadway.

**Tuesday, May 8, 6 p.m., License Commission public hearing** on a petition by IHOP to stay open until 4 a.m. at 831 Massachusetts Ave.

**Wednesday, May 16, MCNA Annual Meeting,** 7 to 9 p.m., Cambridge Rindge & Latin School media cafeteria, 459 Broadway. See Page 1 for agenda.

**Saturday, June 9, Neighborhood Yard Sale** (rain date June 10). See Page 3 for details.

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The M-C News is published by the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association and the Longfellow Neighborhood Council. *Editor:* Paula Lovejoy. *Reporters:* Sue Myers, David Szlag, Tuny McMahan, John Pitkin, Doane Perry, Chantal Eide, Doug Myers, George Bossarte. The MCNA does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

**M-C NEWS**  
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**Annual Meeting**  
**May 16**