

M-C News

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

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September, 2007

MCNA to host Candidates' Night

The Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association has invited all of this year's City Council candidates to speak at a Candidates' Night on Wednesday, October 10, from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Cambridge Rindge & Latin School Media Cafeteria, 359 Broadway.

Moderator David Szlag, a MCNA Coordinating Committee member and longtime resident of Mid-Cambridge, will ask each candidate six questions that have been chosen by a panel of neighborhood residents. The candidates will have one minute to answer each question unless noted. All candidates will be asked the same questions.

Harvard plans major art museum renovations

Harvard University is planning to meet with the neighborhood to discuss planned renovations to its aging facilities at 32 Quincy St., where the Fogg Art Museum and Busch-Reisinger Museum are located.

No formal meeting has been scheduled yet, but Tom Lucey, director of university community relations, has contacted MCNA president Doane Perry to set up a discussion with neighbors.

Lucey described the project as an "urgent priority" for Harvard. "While Harvard had been planning to first create a museum presence in Allston to function as an interim location, university leaders have decided to move forward with the Quincy Street project," he stated.

Internationally famed and Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate, architect Renzo Piano has been hired to design the renovation and reconfiguration and will begin the schematic design process this month. Known for his modern glass structures, Piano's work ranges from museums to the world's tallest skyscrapers. His work can be seen at the Renzo Piano Workshop website rpbw.rui-pro.com/.

Lucey said that residents with questions about the project are welcome to contact him at 617-495-4955.

We look forward to hearing the incumbents' and challengers' answers to question on issues that affect both the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood and the city as a whole. The MCNA forum is believed to be one of the longest-running candidates' events in Cambridge.

Please email questions you would like asked, the sooner the better, to DoanePerry@yahoo.com or mail them to Election Forum, MCNA, P. O. Box 380907, Cambridge, MA 02238. The election is slated for Tuesday, November 6.

Library, War Memorial construction underway

Now in its eighth month of construction, the multimillion-dollar project to expand the main public library on Broadway is now slightly over 20 percent complete, according to construction manager Alan Burne.

The foundation piles of the garage and library addition have been drilled, and the library wing added in 1967 has been demolished. The underground parking garage has 80 percent of its walls poured, and its roof slab is currently being formed with the hope that it will be waterproofed and backfilled by Thanksgiving.

One-and-a-half floors of the addition remain to be excavated before the footings for the main support columns are formed and poured. Erection of steel for the building is planned to begin in December.

Here are a few "library expansion factoids:"

- Roughly 60 men and women work on the site, with that number increasing to around 100 to 120 when the manpower peaks next spring;
- Some 302 holes, each between 30 and 40 feet in depth, have been drilled and filled. 151 of these have had steel columns placed inside; over 235 tons of steel columns have been set; 3,540 cubic yards of concrete have been placed, and roughly 42,500 cubic yards of excavated dirt have been removed from the site; and, the contractor has reported a recycling rate of 98 percent.

The War Memorial renovation project is also moving forward. Most of the heavy demolition and
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— MCNA sets up five working committees —

The growing complexity of city government, the aging of our population, and serious threats to our environment have raised new challenges to the fulfillment of MCNA's mission to serve the residents of our neighborhood.

To meet these challenges in the most effective way, the MCNA Coordinating Committee in August created committees focused on five major areas of concern: Quality of Life, Environment, City Government, Major Construction Projects and Development, and Community Outreach. The committees are chaired by Coordinating Committee members, and other MCNA members and Cambridge residents are encouraged to join in the groups' efforts.

Each group is currently developing objectives for the coming year, as well as strategies to include non-Coordinating Committee members. Committees will use this newsletter, meetings and the Internet to inform and involve the community.

Construction and Development

Chair: Chris Robinson

**Contact: chrisrobinson@rocketmail.com
or 617-661-4731**

No resident of Mid-Cambridge can be unaware of the major construction underway at the Public Library and the War Memorial. This will soon be joined by a thorough renovation of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, scheduled to begin in 2009. The combined estimated cost of these three projects now stands at \$200 million.

In order to provide neighborhood oversight of this enterprise and to respond to future development, MCNA has established a committee on major construction projects. All interested neighborhood residents are welcome to participate.

Of course, municipal construction is not the only kind which is of concern to our neighborhood. Recently, several private real estate developers have stirred neighborhood concerns with their requests to the Board of Zoning Appeals for variances from the city's zoning laws. Fortunately, Doug Myers from our Association has recently been selected to serve on the BZA. However, if we are to preserve the residential character of our neighborhood, we must be energetic and responsive to all proposals that affect us.

Quality of Life: Retiring in Place

Chair: Tuny McMahon

Contact: tunymcm@comcast.net

A group of Coordinating Committee members is interested in exploring how we can help Mid-Cambridge residents stay in their homes as they age and take advantage of services and opportunities available to them. Some of these might be offered by the city and some might be things we can arrange ourselves.

At present we are trying to educate ourselves about existing programs and models in other communities to see which features might be most

beneficial to the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood.

If you are interested in working with us or have ideas to share, please contact Tuny McMahon, Elizabeth Gombosi, or Fritz Donovan. We can use all your thoughts! We will report to all as we progress.

Environment: Green News

Chair: Chantal Eide

Contact: cna@greencambridge.org

Several Mid-Cambridge residents have already joined in the local neighborhood Green group. We are seeking effective ways to reduce carbon emissions in our homes and neighborhood, and work with like-minded people to promote large-scale change.

Sue Butler this month received permission from the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission to place one Air-X wind turbine on her house at 14 Clinton St. for a year, as a test and means of gathering data. She has already called her electrician!

Peter Pruyn held an outdoor screening of "An Inconvenient Truth" in Inman Square on Aug. 11. It was well attended, and Christina's Ice Cream store donated ice cream for the event.

Rosalie Anders is writing a *Green Manual for Living in Cambridge*. The Low Carbon Diet to reduce energy consumption is a good resource for this, but is more applicable to life in the suburbs. We need an urban slant for Cambridge. Sue Butler held a brainstorming meeting on Aug. 9 for people to exchange ideas about what could be written in the Green Manual. Among subjects to be covered are how to get around Cambridge without a car and ideas about green building. Ways to reach a more diverse audience, such as putting on skits at the River Festival, were also discussed. Ideas may be submitted to randers@cambridgema.gov.

Let us know about any Green or community ideas you might have: cna@greencambridge.org.

Neighbors encouraged to join in efforts

City Government

Chair: Fritz Donovan

Contact: Call Fritz at 617-497-6634.

Although media and public attention tends to focus on the Cambridge City Council, a great deal of city business is conducted by boards and commissions that few residents are more than barely aware of. Decisions coming daily out of that maze of powerful groups are for the most part not subject to review by the City Council. Increasingly, the few which are have been simply ratified by Council members who openly state they feel it is not their place to second-guess the decisions of the lower boards.

It is therefore important for residents to be aware of city procedures and how important issues such as infill proposals are evaluated from the earliest stage in their progress through the various approval boards.

The City Government Subcommittee plans to inventory the entire structure of city boards and commissions, study how they are staffed and how they function, and make recommendations to improve their accessibility and value to the residents they serve.

A major goal of this subcommittee will be to create a coordinated Web-based resource of each

board's charter, current membership, and links to current meeting schedules and agendas. A limited form of printed guide will also be produced for those who do not use the Internet.

In addition, by monitoring as many meetings as possible, this subcommittee will develop recommendations for improving the public's ability to observe and understand the often complex activities of the various boards and commissions.

Residents interested in attending Cambridge board and commission meetings to help in this effort are encouraged to contact the MCNA Coordinating Committee through MCNA.com or co-chair Fritz Donovan at 617-497-6634.

Community Outreach

Chair: George Bossarte

Contact: gbeng@world.std.com

The Community Outreach Subcommittee coordinates MCNA's existing channels of communication and develops new way of achieving the organization's mission.

This includes publishing the M-C News and the MCNA.org Web site, sending news announcements that are emailed to members, and press releases. Currently we are taking inventory of votes by the membership and working on ways to use the Internet to vote on neighborhood issues.

Penelope Kleespies Wins Good Neighbor Award

On May 16, the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association awarded the Association's second Good Neighbor Award to Penelope Kleespies in recognition of her years directing innovative and popular programs at the Longfellow Community School for the neighborhood. Her work has been an inspiration for all those who have benefited from her creativity and leadership.

The award was announced by president Doane Perry at the Association's annual meeting. The award says, "Coordinator, teacher of music and the arts, camp director, park 'mother,' and oral historian are just some of the hats she has worn over the years. She has enriched the lives and broadened the horizons of generations of Longfellow pupils and countless neighborhood children and adults."

The award was established by a vote of the Association's members in January of 2006, and Ms. Kleespies was selected by the Association's board to be the second recipient.



Penelope Kleespies accepted the Good Neighbor Award from MCNA CC members at the June Ice Cream Social. From left are John Pitkin, Frankie Lieberman, Chantal Elde, Tuny McMahon, Penelope Kleespies, Doane Perry and Fritz Donovan. To find out more about activities at the Longfellow Community School, including music lessons and yoga classes, contact Penelope at 617-349-6260.

Construction update: Library and War Memorial

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waste removal was scheduled to be 80 percent completed by Labor Day.

During the autumn months, the contractor will focus on completing the demolition, installing a new roof and "roughing-in" the mechanical, plumbing and electrical system improvements, as well as framing-in various components of the interior architecture. The project is scheduled for completion at the end of summer next year.

Vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns along Cambridge Street in front of the War Memorial Building have been altered for the duration of the renovation contract. The east-west walkway along Cambridge Street has been closed to pedestrians, allowing the contractor staging and access adjacency in order to expedite construction, as well as

reduce the cost of the project and improve public safety while the work is underway.

Pedestrians are required to cross to the north side of the street at the existing crosswalks at Roberts Road and Trowbridge Street. The "Jersey barriers" have been placed—and modified based upon some very thoughtful neighborhood input—in order to have safe separation of construction activities from the public way, and to be capable of withstanding this winter's snowplows.

The Main Library Expansion Project website is: <http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/CPL/booksandmortar/bandm.html>

The War Memorial summary is located on the city's Web page, www.cambridgema.gov/TheWorks. Then click on Public Construction Schedule, Public Buildings Under Construction.

NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

Wednesday, October 10, MCNA Candidates' Night. Candidates for City Council will answer neighbors' questions. 7 to 9 p.m., Cambridge Rindge & Latin School Media Cafeteria, 359 Broadway. See Page 1 for more details.

Tuesday, October 2, 7:40 p.m. Planning Board hearing regarding a proposal for partial **demolition and expansion of Hotel Tria** at Remington Street and Mass. Ave. Meets at City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway.

Tuesday, October 16, 7:40 p.m., Planning Board hearing regarding the proposed **Hancock Street-Lee Street downzoning.** Meets at City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway.

The M-C News is published by the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association and the Longfellow Neighborhood Council. *Editor:* Paula Lovejoy. *Reporters:* Chris Robinson, Elizabeth Gombosi, Fritz Donovan, David Szlag, Tuny McMahon, Doane Perry, Chantal Eide, Doug Myers, George Bossarte. The MCNA does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

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