

Belmont Citizens Forum

Vol. 4, No. 5

A Newsletter for Belmont Residents

September 2003

New Town Could Be Built at Belmont's Border

By Michael Nakagawa

The City of Cambridge has undertaken the planning of five million square feet of new development in a one-half square mile area just off Concord Avenue. (Cambridge is six and one-half square miles in total.)

The plans would add the equivalent of three Hancock towers worth of residential and commercial space, or as much square footage as is planned for East Cambridge's North Point. This would double the existing density on the land under study, which stretches from the Fresh Pond Mall west to the Belmont border and from the Alewife Reservation south to Concord Avenue. Development of this magnitude would likely add 18,000 vehicle trips per day to what is already a congested area, and much of that traffic would end up in Belmont.

Planners are suggesting that more multi-family housing be built along Concord Avenue, that new streets be laid out between Fawcett, Wheeler, and Moulton Streets, that a pedestrian bridge be built over the commuter railroad tracks to the Alewife T-station, that portions of the Fresh Pond shopping center be enclosed, and that a connecting road be built from Alewife Brook Parkway into the light industrial area known as the Quadrangle, which is sandwiched between Concord Avenue and the MBTA commuter rail line and which would be extensively redeveloped for mixed use.

Situated in what was once The Great Swamp, this land is an obvious spot for redevelopment. Much of it is already covered with impervious sur-

faces: asphalt parking lots and concrete block buildings. It would be a boon to the surrounding community if Cambridge were to expose underground streams here to the daylight, provide parks and flood storage, and add residences and jobs close to public transportation and shopping. To succeed, however, the development would have to be easily accessible *on foot* from the Alewife T-station and the Fresh Pond shopping area.

Traffic Impact Needs Serious Study

David Dixon of Goody, Clancy & Associates, the lead consultant on this project for the City of Cambridge, is an advocate of high-density development, which he has said can help prevent urban

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Environmental Events Calendar

Harbor Islands Cruise. Join national park rangers and scientists on board a Boston Harbor cruise boat. Explore the lighthouses, forts, and natural wonders of this 34-island park area. The tour includes a stop at Georges Island. Now running **every Wednesday 12 – 2 p.m. until September 26.** For information, call (617) 223-8666. Made possible by Boston Harbor Recreational.

Hike Fernald Center. Take a two-hour walk through the open spaces of Waltham's Fernald Center with leaders of the Waltham Land Trust on **Sunday, September 28 at 2 p.m.** This 200-acre site, comprised of hills, fields, streams, and woods, is a national historic landmark and a key link in the Western Greenway. Fernald Center is the oldest

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Belmont Citizens Forum, Inc.

is a not-for-profit organization that strives to maintain the small-town atmosphere of Belmont, Massachusetts, by preserving its natural and historical resources, limiting traffic growth, and enhancing pedestrian safety.

We do this by keeping residents informed about planning and zoning issues, by participating actively in public hearings, and by organizing forums on key subjects. Our newsletter is published six times a year (January, March, May, July, September, and November). Published material represents the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Belmont Citizens Forum.

Letters to the editor may be sent to
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You may read this newsletter on-line
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institution in the western hemisphere for people with developmental disabilities. The proposed closure and re-use plans for this property will have a major impact on Belmont. 200 Trapelo Road, Waltham. Park in the lot on the left just off Trapelo. For more information, call 781- 893-1572.

Photography at Fresh Pond. Fresh Pond is the perfect spot for photography because it offers so many subjects: plants, animals, and people. Bring your digital, film, or video cameras and get ready to capture some of these interesting and beautiful images. **Sunday, September 28, 1-3 p.m.** Meet at Maynard Ecology center, basement of Neville Place, 650 Concord Avenue, Cambridge. Register by calling Jean Rogers at (617) 349-4793 and leaving your name and number. Or you may send e-mail to Elizabeth Wylde at friendsoffreshpond@yahoo.com

Living With Backyard Wildlife. Squirrels, deer, and coyotes—oh my! Many of these animals live in our very own backyards. Learn about the fascinating behavior of some local wild life and how we can co-exist by excluding them from places, in and around homes, where they are not welcome. This talk will be given by Linda Cocca, Coordinator of Mass Audubon's Wildlife Info Hotline. **Wednesday, October 1, 7-8:30 p.m.** at Habitat, 10 Juniper Road, Belmont. Call (617) 489-5050 to register. There is a \$6 fee for members and \$8 fee for non-members. This event is co-sponsored by Drumlin Farm.

Belmont Citizens Forum Environmental Committee. This committee, chaired by Michael Baram, will discuss its initiatives for the coming year on **Thursday, October 2, at 7:30 p.m.** in the staff room of the Belmont Memorial Library. These include a local flooding survey, a study of air pollution from vehicle emissions and its effect on health, and research on contractor noise. If you are interested in working actively on these or other environmental issues, please join us.

Western Greenway Walk. Explore the natural, cultural, and historic connected habitats of Belmont, Waltham, and Lexington on this three-mile trek with Roger Wrubel. The walk will pass through the

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Condominium Complex Considered for Uplands

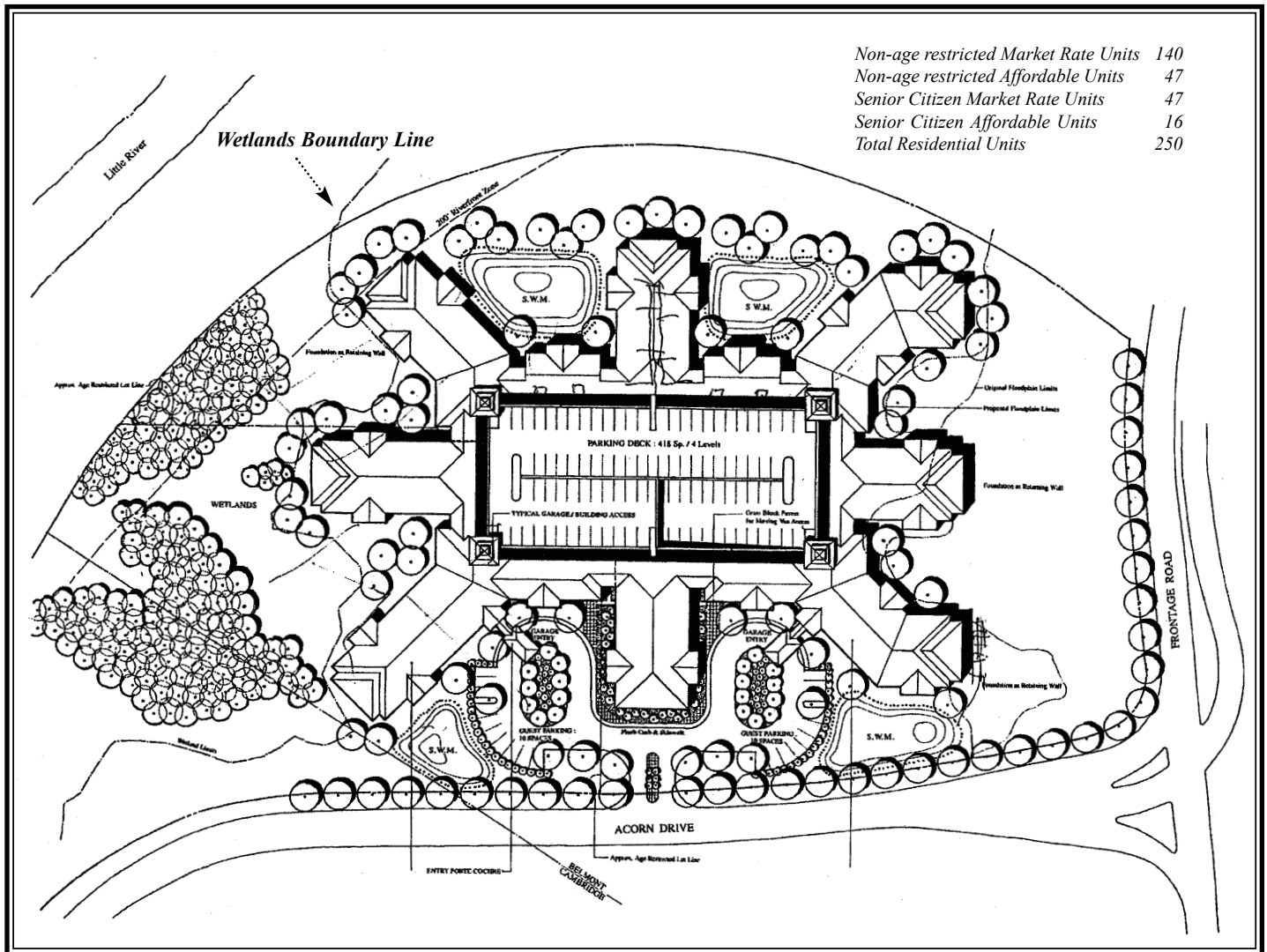
By Sue Bass

The Belmont Uplands is an irregularly shaped knoll surrounded by wetlands and flood plain near the intersection of Lake Street and Route 2. At its highest point, it is 21 feet above sea level, but only the peak (measuring approximately 60 feet by 80 feet) is that high. At the 15-foot contour line on a topographical map, the knoll is about 480 feet long by 260 feet wide (less than three acres) and the land drops off sharply from there. The small size of this upland portion, which is shaped like a butterfly, is

key to the dispute about the land's future.

Much of what has been built in the area during the past half-century, including portions of the former Arthur D. Little complex, could not be built under today's wetlands protection laws. The knoll was originally part of the Arthur D. Little property, which was sold for \$21 million to O'Neill Properties of Pennsylvania in a deal involving O'Neill's Arsenal property in Watertown. Within a year, in the fall of 2000, O'Neill resold all but 15 acres to Bulfinch Companies for \$63 million, \$42 million more than it had paid.

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O'Neill Properties, of Pennsylvania, would like to build this four-story, 250-unit condominium complex on the Belmont Uplands. The central parking deck would accommodate 418 cars; there would be surface parking for 20 more. This rezoning request is scheduled to come before Town Meeting on November 17, 2003. Drawing by Minno & Wasko, Architects and Planners.



Condominium Complex, from page 3

Since then, O'Neill has sought to develop the remaining acreage, most of which is in Belmont. Last year, O'Neill asked Town Meeting to rezone the property (long zoned for two-family houses) to allow a 245,000-square-foot office or R&D (research and development) complex. Tempted by predictions of significant tax revenue, Town Meeting agreed in May 2002.

In June 2003, however, when O'Neill filed with the Belmont Conservation Commission for an Order of Conditions to build that office development, the ConCom decided that the proposed 4.4-acre square block of development was ill-suited to the irregularly-shaped knoll. About a quarter of the development would have stood in wetlands buffer zones. In a few places, the development would have been as little as eight feet from the wetland itself.

O'Neill has appealed the ConCom's denial of its application to the state Department of Environmental Protection. The DEP has taken no action so far. The Belmont Citizens Forum is participating in the appeals process in support of the ConCom.

Office Real Estate Market Collapsed

Meanwhile, the market for R&D and office space in the area has collapsed and, as a result, O'Neill has submitted a second rezoning request to the town that would allow it to construct a 250-unit condominium complex at the Uplands instead of an R&D building. A map provided by the company at the end of August showed a spider-shaped apartment building with eight legs extending from a central parking deck. The curved lines of the perimeter are bent around the wetland and flood plain boundaries. At a meeting with the Board of Selectmen, O'Neill consultants said that, compared with the R&D building, the housing would encroach less on the wetlands buffer zone. However, portions of the construction would still be not only in the buffer zone but quite close to the edge of the wetlands themselves.

O'Neill said that one quarter of the 250 residential units planned, or about 62 apartments, would be affordable for those whose income is below the

median for the area. A public hearing on the Memorandum of Agreement between the town and O'Neill Properties, governing use of the property for multi-family dwellings, is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14 at 7:30 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of Belmont Town Hall. A Town Meeting to consider the rezoning is scheduled for Monday, November 17, at 7:30 p.m. in the Chenery Middle School Auditorium.

Before the 2002 rezoning, town planners estimated that a maximum of 43 two-family houses could be built on that land, based on a 1994 wetlands map showing 8.7 acres of upland. Part of the town's impetus for rezoning the O'Neill land for R&D was to eliminate the possibility of housing on that site, isolated as it is from other Belmont neighborhoods. The 2002 rezoning increased the property's value, according to Belmont assessors, from \$3 million in 2001 to nearly \$12 million in 2003.

Last month, in a continuing effort to secure permits for the R&D building it originally proposed, O'Neill filed its final environmental impact report for the project under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act. Comments on the MEPA filing are due by September 25.

Sue Bass is Vice President of the Belmont Citizens Forum and represents Precinct 3 in Town Meeting.



Euonymus

Environmental Events, *continued from page 2*

Mass Audubon, McLean Hospital, Rock Meadow, Metropolitan State Hospital, and Olympus Hospital properties before ending with a walk along the 18th

century Bow Road. Return transportation will be provided. Bring water and a light snack if desired. There is a \$20 fee for Mass Audubon members and \$24 fee for non-members. **Sunday, October 19, 8-11:30 a.m.**
—Stacey Fabiano

TRAPELO ROAD WORKSHOPS SCHEDULED

The Belmont St./Trapelo Rd. Design Subcommittee of the Belmont Planning Board invites all interested residents and businesspeople to participate in a series of workshops beginning in October. The meetings will focus on particular portions of the corridor and how the roadway's dimensions and features should be altered:

how many lanes of traffic are needed at what points, where pedestrian crossings are most important, how the street's design and furnishings can best support the land uses and activities along the road, and so forth. Members of Belmont's Traffic Advisory

Committee and other Town boards and officials will attend.

The Board will provide photographs, base maps, and tracing paper.

Please bring your ideas.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 7 P.M.

Topic: "School Street to Gilbert Street" Location: Senior Center

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 7 P.M.

Topic: "Gilbert Street to Maple Street" Location: Butler School Cafeteria

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 7 P.M.

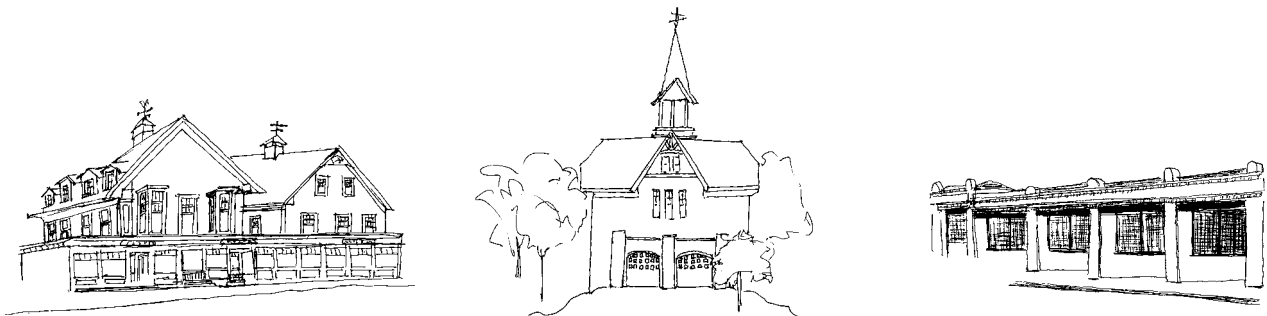
Topic: "Cambridge Line to School Street" Location: Senior Center

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 7 P.M.

Topic: "Maple Street to Waverley Square" Location: Butler School Cafeteria

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 7 P.M.

Topic: Entire Corridor Location: Chenery Middle School Community Room





The Belmont Uplands: Wildlife, Wetlands, Forests, and Development

A Public Forum
Tuesday, October 21, 7:30-9 p.m.
All Saints Episcopal Church, Brewster Hall
Corner of Common and Clark Streets, Belmont

The Belmont Uplands is a 15-acre parcel of land adjacent to the Alewife Reservation, a state-owned urban wild. It is home to a rich variety of plants and animals including beaver, mink, fox, falcons, woodcocks, and a rare silver maple forest. Five expert speakers will describe the natural characteristics of this property and the effect that development is likely to have on its fragile ecosystem.

Speakers:

Peter Alden

Editor, *National Audubon Society Field Guide to New England*

Chuck Katuska

Forester, Board of Mass. Association. of Conservation Commissions

Cynthia Jensen, Ph.D.

Conservation Biologist/Ecologist, Bioengineering Inc.

Alewife Consultant on the Alewife Reservation Master Plan

Dr. David Morimoto

Program Director, Natural Sciences and Mathematics; Ecologist

Lesley University

Robert France, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Harvard School of Design,

Author, *Water Sensitive Planning and Design*

Sponsored by the Belmont Citizens Forum and the Friends of Alewife Reservation

Cambridge Development Plan Could Put Thousands

Continued from page 8

sprawl and create more cohesive communities. Unfortunately, the plan now under discussion does not take into account the traffic impact on surround-

ing communities. The city's consultants consider the severe traffic back-ups at Alewife to be "a regional problem" and outside the scope of this project. The residents being formally consulted on the plan are only those who live within the small



More Cars Per Day on Belmont's Concord Avenue

Cambridge Highlands neighborhood between the former Sancta Maria hospital and Blanchard Road, an area that houses just 700 people. North and West Cambridge (with their 30,000 residents) as well as Belmont (with its 24,000 residents) are not represented on the Concord-Alewife Study Committee, which is reviewing the project.

While, at first glance, increased development near a subway station in an already dense city might seem reasonable, topographical and transportation-related constraints mean that irresponsible development here will have an impact for miles around.

Drivers looking to bypass the traffic bottlenecks at Alewife will stream through residential side streets far from the study area. Citizens anticipate that the neighborhoods of Belmont and Watertown bounded by Pleasant Street, Mt. Auburn Street, and the Cambridge and Arlington borders will become cluttered with cars commuting between the northwest suburbs and Boston. Once this area backs up, Trapelo Road will probably be next.

Currently, intersections in the Alewife vicinity have a Level of Service rating of "F" during rush hour. This means that cars waiting at a light cannot get through the intersection in one signal cycle. Therefore, each arriving car simply adds to the length of the lines, once the capacity of the junction has been exceeded.

Stormwater Sewers Inadequate

Equally problematic, the proposed development is almost entirely within the Alewife Brook floodplain. This area of Cambridge, Arlington, and Belmont experienced significant flooding in 1996, 1998, and 2001. Because these three communities still have sewers that combine wastewater and stormwater, heavy rains overwhelm the system and untreated wastewater flows into Alewife Brook and surrounding areas, raising public health concerns.

To alleviate some of the overflow, Cambridge has planned to separate some of its sewer and stormwater pipes, directing only the wastewater for treatment at Boston Harbor's Deer Island facility. However, instead of using a portion of the Concord-Alewife area as a stormwater detention pond for the

newly separated stormwater flows, the city plans to pipe the area's 57 million gallons of street runoff each year past the Quadrangle and directly into the Alewife Brook Reservation. This would increase flooding downstream during the largest storms. The downstream sewers serving Massachusetts Avenue are no longer scheduled for separation under the revised plans and will continue to overflow with untreated human waste during heavy storms.

Opportunities to Improve Land

Expansive development without the infrastructure improvements needed to handle it adequately can be a recipe for disaster. Rather than simply trying to maximize density, the planning for this tortured natural resource area should begin with an exploration of the area's best use in the context of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Sensible development could actually be used to restore some of the land's natural functions. For example, a park with a prominent pond tied into the stormwater system could help alleviate area flooding and sewer problems, while providing a pleasant environment for new residents and local businesses. Even if only a small percentage of the area were set aside for a functional amenity such as this, it would be significant, since this percentage would amount to hundreds of acres.

The Concord-Alewife Study Committee will hold a public forum, tentatively scheduled for December 10, 2003, to discuss plans for the area. (Check the Cambridge Community Development page at www.cambridgema.gov for the exact time and place.) Residents from surrounding communities should grasp this opportunity to voice their support for sustainable development here.

Michael Nakagawa lives near Alewife Brook in North Cambridge.

Sustainable design increases a building's comfort and efficiency while conserving natural resources. A "green" building is one that maximizes natural lighting to minimize indoor lighting requirements and is sited in such a way as to reduce heating and cooling expenses.

These principles and many others can be applied to both new construction and existing facilities.

Architects Martha Pilgreen and Richard Jones of Perry Dean Rogers in Boston will present a case study of one recently completed project, a classroom building at Harvard University, which was based on sustainable design concepts.

They will also discuss broader issues, such as how to initiate such projects, how to convince reluctant constituencies, and how to balance short-term financial commitments with long-term financial aid and various environmental benefits.

Refreshments will be served.

For more information, please contact the Belmont Citizens Forum at (617) 484-1844 or visit www.belmontcitizensforum.org

Sponsored by Friends of the Belmont Citizens Forum.

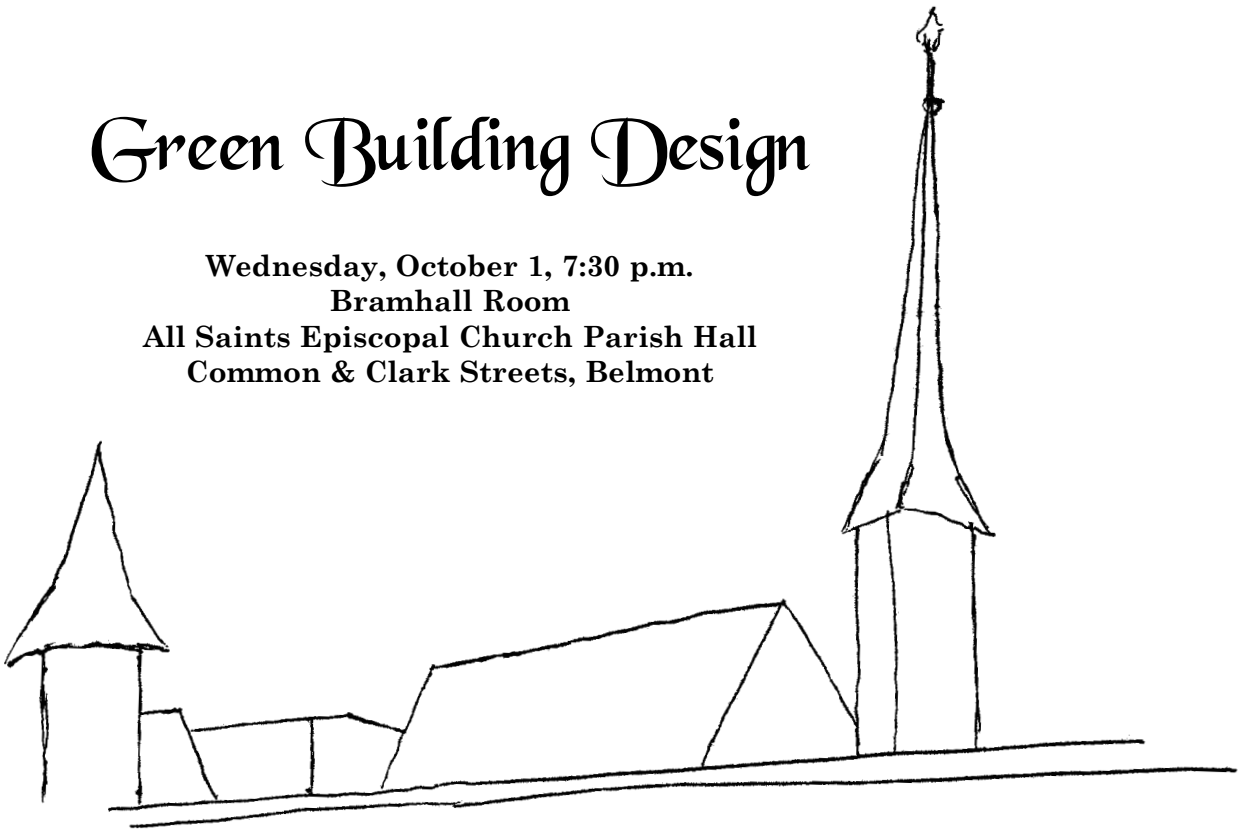
Green Building Design

Wednesday, October 1, 7:30 p.m.

Bramhall Room

All Saints Episcopal Church Parish Hall

Common & Clark Streets, Belmont



McLean Produces Junction Brook Witnesses

Four employees or consultants of McLean Hospital say they have seen Junction Brook dry at the top, and not just at the bottom. These surprise witnesses were announced at the end of July, despite McLean's stipulation this spring, "There are no recorded observations of the stream being dry between Main Road and the point that is approximately 200 feet north of or above Pleasant Street, i.e., the first 600 feet of the stream."

McLean and the Belmont Citizens Forum have been disputing for two and a half years whether Junction Brook, which flows down a wooded slope to Pleasant Street across from the former Belmont Springs warehouse, is perennial or intermittent. If the brook is ruled to be perennial, the decision might reduce the amount of development allowed nearby. American Retirement Corporation plans to build a 482-unit senior complex 100 feet away from the brook. The state Rivers Protection Act regulates development within 200 feet of perennial streams.

The case is being heard in an administrative proceeding in the state Department of Environmental Protection, presided over by Administrative Law Judge James Rooney.

This spring, Rooney rejected the Belmont Citizens Forum's argument that the brook should be considered perennial because only man-made interference allowed it to run dry: a porous hundred-year-old sewer line running near the brook was sopping up ground water that would otherwise have fed the brook. While rejecting that legal argument, Rooney raised a new possibility: that the brook could be segmented, with the top perennial and the

bottom intermittent. He asked the parties to agree on the facts, and McLean's lawyers filed a stipulation on March 26 that the top three quarters of the brook had not been observed dry. Subsequently, Rooney ruled that the segmenting argument was legally sound.

Three months after its stipulation, however, McLean filed testimony that three people had seen the brook dry at the top sometime during the month of August in various years between 1997 and 2000: Andrew Healy, McLean's director of facilities; Thomas Gallagher, a McLean building and grounds employee; and Alexander MacPherson, a mechanic and equipment operator at McLean. None of them reported having any documents to support or date their observations. Last month, however, Catherine Wilkey of Pressley Associates, a consultant to McLean, produced pictures she said were probably taken on July 31, 1997, showing the brook dry both up and down from approximately the midpoint of the 800-foot brook, where it diverges from the Coal Road.

The Belmont Citizens Forum argued before the Belmont Conservation Commission in 2001, as the McLean Open Space Alliance had argued in 1997, when McLean first sought a determination of the status of Junction Brook, that 1997 was a drought year. That evidence is likely to be aired again before Judge Rooney. The hearing was scheduled for September 18 and 19 in the Boston office of the Department of Environmental Protection at 1 Winter Street.

—Sue Bass



Clover

Legislation Would Ban Trucks North of Route 2



in Arlington and Medford from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

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areas to see what we could do jointly to influence driving behavior and minimize our exposure to traffic. There are no easy answers. On Pleasant Street, for example, there are structural and governmental issues at both the state and town levels that make calming traffic on this important route extremely challenging.

State Route vs. State Highway

For one thing, Pleasant Street (Route 60) is a “state-numbered route.” That designation creates a sort of shared responsibility between the towns that it passes through and the Massachusetts Highway Department, a state-run organization that oversees all expenditures on state highways. However, Pleasant Street is technically not a “state highway.” Towns maintain it, while Mass Highway approves any changes and sometimes initiates changes. For example, if citizens wanted to change a sign to reduce a speed limit, it would require the approval of officials at Mass Highway.

There are unwritten policies and procedures that can be cited whenever changes are proposed or implemented. For example, I have been told by Mass Highway engineers that there is a policy of not restricting trucks on state-numbered roads, yet there already are truck restrictions on state-numbered roads in Wellesley and Lincoln. Obviously, the line between what a town can do and what the state can do has not been explicitly defined through legislation. When traffic-calming projects are proposed, it is unclear who has jurisdiction and, with budgets being cut, neither the towns nor the state have the staff or the funding to pursue this work.

A Shortcut to Chelsea

Our Arlington group decided to begin by tackling late-night trucking on Pleasant Street. It seemed to us that very large trucks were using Pleasant Street as a shortcut to get to communities north of Route 93. To verify this, four of us stayed up all night to count trucks for a study being con-

ducted by Arlington’s Transportation Advisory Committee. We noticed that most of the large trucks (six-wheelers or more) were petroleum trucks heading to Chelsea and East Boston and all of them could easily have used Routes 2, 95, and 93 to get where they wanted to go. Very few trucking companies were represented, and less than 30 trucks passed between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. This means that a nighttime restriction would have a negligible effect on commerce, yet the reduction of noise and rumble would be significant during the quiet of night.

We then asked Representative Jim Marzilli of Arlington to help us sponsor a bill that would prevent large trucks from using Pleasant Street between Routes 2 and 93 from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. Marzilli submitted Bill 1233 in December of last year, just in time for the 2003-2004 legislative session, which began in January. A public hearing was held on April 1 and the bill is currently under study by the State Transportation Committee. Representatives Anne Paulsen (Belmont) and Paul Denato (Medford) and Senator Robert Havern have all agreed to support it.

Cambridge Tried Citywide Ban

Night truck bans are not a new idea. The Cambridge City Council voted in 1999 to ban through trucks (those not delivering goods to Cambridge) citywide between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. According to Sergeant Ken Hamilton of the Belmont Police Department, Cambridge and Somerville have historically put up with heavy truck traffic because many large trucks, particularly those carrying propane and gasoline, cannot use the Boston tunnels. But when one municipality enacts a truck ban, it has an effect on surrounding communities. The State Attorney General asked Cambridge to suspend its ban until a regional study of truck routes could be initiated. A subsequent four-year effort by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to adopt a regional plan ended in a stalemate when many towns could not agree on which roads should become designated routes. Cambridge

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Truck Ban, *continued from page 13*

tried to act unilaterally a second time, in 2003, when it adopted a revised truck routing plan for the city based on the MAPC study recommendations. (For details on these routes, see <http://www.cambridge.ma.gov/~Traffic/trucks/Brochure4%20March.pdf>) This plan is not being enforced, said Cambridge Transportation Planner Jason Schrieber, because Mass Highway did not act to allow the bans and recently threatened to withhold from the city millions of dollars in funds for roadway reconstruction. Cambridge now has truck bans only on selected streets that have been approved by Mass Highway. City officials are still working to win the department's approval of the regional study recommendations, which would designate a few routes for trucks at night and shut down the rest of the city to through commercial traffic between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.

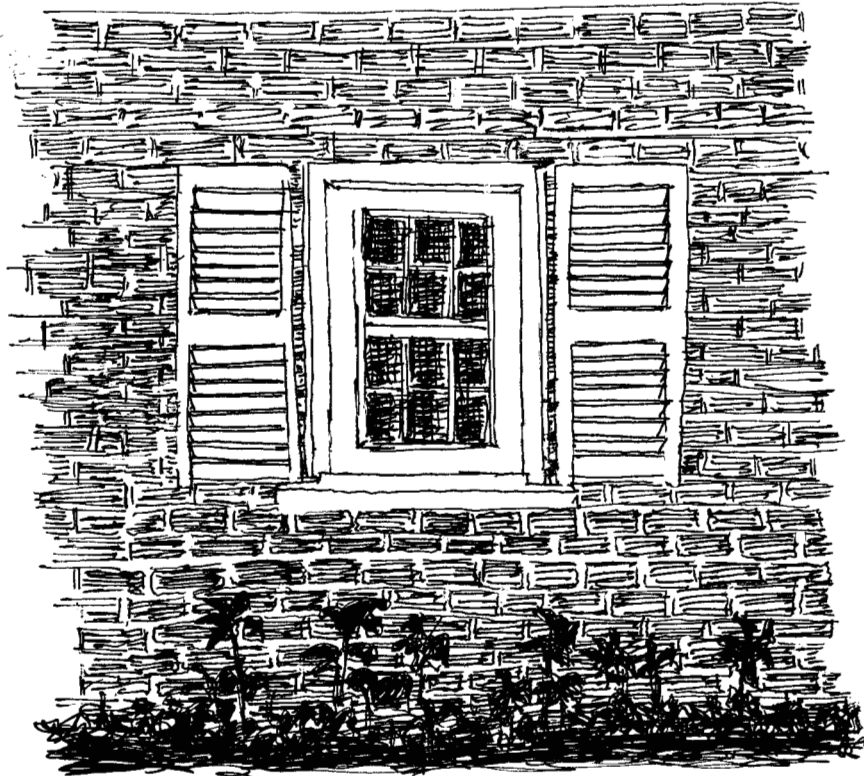
Belmont has a 24-hour truck ban on just two

streets in town: Brighton and upper Prospect/Clifton. These bans put more trucks on Pleasant Street, Trapelo Road, and Concord Avenue, according to Sergeant Hamilton.

Finding Good Alternate Routes

Is it possible to ban trucks on Pleasant Street as well? According to Representative Anne Paulsen, a 24-hour ban has been discussed in the past, but she says: "When we discuss truck traffic, the question is, where is the alternate route for them to go? Well, (if they are traveling east) they could go out Trapelo Road to Route 128 and come back toward town on Route 2 (10 miles out of the way), or they could go down Cross Street, but that hasn't gone over well in the past."

She says that the proposed Arlington ban would be easier for the trucking industry to accept, because the trucks wouldn't have to go on what she calls a



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“a merry chase.”

“My understanding is that these oil trucks are making a left turn off Route 2 onto Pleasant Street in Arlington. An alternate route to Chelsea using Route 93 wouldn’t add that many miles to the trip.” Also, the ban would have no effect on daytime traffic patterns.

What sorts of trucks use Pleasant Street in Belmont during the wee hours of the morning? Sergeant Hamilton says that, while working the night shift, he has seen sanitation trucks headed west toward Waltham and Watertown, and occasional Shaw’s Market trucks. “The number of trucks is not that great, but it can sound like a lot, especially when they are empty.”

Speed Increases Noise Level

Paulsen believes that speed has an effect on noise levels. “Having lived on School Street for years and slept in a bedroom with the windows open, I have become an expert on this subject,” she said. “If truck traffic traveled at 25 miles per hour, it wouldn’t be half as intrusive as when it’s going 40 mph. The noise these trucks make is much worse for every five miles per hour you add to the speed.”

This is also a safety issue, she claims. “If you get hit by a car going 25, you break a leg. If you get by a car going 40, you’re dead.” She thinks that structural changes to the roadways, such as wider median strips and curbing that is “pulled out” at the corners (the kinds of changes now being made to Aberdeen Avenue in Cambridge), should become the norm.

Bill Would Affect Belmont Indirectly

If passed, Bill 1233 would apply only to truck traffic in Arlington and Medford, but it could reduce the number of trucks on Pleasant Street in Belmont as well, by eliminating a through route for some trucks. Although this bill does not go as far as some would like, its advocates believe it is a good first step in trying to calm traffic in this residential area.

If you would like more information about the bill, you may send e-mail to ed@cuoco.com and put your name on a list to receive regular updates. You may also talk directly to your state senator or representative.

Ed Cuoco lives on Pleasant Street in Arlington. Sharon Vanderslice contributed to this article.

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People Are Asking

Can We Ban Trucks at Night on Pleasant Street?

By Ed Cuoco

Probably one of the most contentious issues facing towns around Boston in the next few years is what to do about growing traffic volumes and their effects on the quality of life: increased accidents, noise, and pollution.

After a recent truck accident that came close to setting a house on fire, several of my neighbors on Pleasant Street in Arlington met to discuss what we could do about traffic on our street. We all had similar complaints: 18-wheelers barreling along in the early hours of the morning, cars that were driven by intoxicated or sleepy drivers crashing into telephone poles, signage that failed to warn motorists appropriately. Furthermore, police logs indicated that accidents had become more frequent as traffic volumes

soared. On a holiday weekday last winter, over 22,000 vehicles drove past our front doors.

It was clear to us that Pleasant Street had become a commercial trucking corridor, with no allowances made for the residents who live along this historic roadway. Actually, the street wasn't designed to support the kind of traffic it is now carrying. There are over a dozen homes with less than 25-foot setbacks on one short stretch between Route 2 and Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington. Homes in neighboring Belmont and Medford also sit close to this road. We all worry that, with more people walking and biking on this street, someone will be seriously hurt. Could such a tragedy be averted if we employed warning signs or other traffic-calming techniques? We decided it was time to press our traffic and public officials *and ourselves* into action.

What might be best for one group might not necessarily be good for others, we realized, so we purposely began talking to residents in neighboring

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