

HIGHLIGHT

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The Newsletter of the High Street Hill Association

April 2006

Please Join Us for Your Neighborhood Association's

Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner

Monday, April 24th at
Latvian Lutheran Church
58 Irving Street

6:00 PM Family Potluck Dinner

7:00 PM *Featured Speaker* **CATHERINE CAGLE**, Director, Brookline Economic Development Department

Those with last names beginning with A-F please bring a dessert, G-M a salad, and N-Z a main dish.

HSHA Annual Business Meeting to Follow

For almost fifty years the High Street Hill Association has worked to promote a feeling of neighborliness and has been an advocate for the interests of its residents on a wide array of issues. At each monthly meeting we sit around a board member's kitchen table to discuss, debate and plan. Our Annual Meeting is a great chance to hear what we've been up to and meet old and new neighbors over dinner. There will be a discussion about development on Route 9, a chance to ask the DPW Commissioner about our neighborhood streets and a visit from our State Representative, Jeffrey Sanchez.

Big Oaks From Little Acorns...

Take a Long Time

Over the last few years we have been saddened at the loss of two of the 140 year old, majestic oak trees on Philbrick Square. Although the Town's Forestry Division planted replacement saplings, the families that live on Upland Road and overlook the park decided that they would try to fill the space in the open sky a bit quicker. Led by Betsy DeWitt, they collected money and then worked with Director of

Parks & Open Space
Erin Chute Gallentine
and Conservation
Administrator Tom
Brady to match the
funds and plant a
larger oak. According
to Betsy, it was no
small task to locate
and transplant such a
specimen. The work
was completed a few



weeks ago and the Town has done a great job positioning, bracing and watering the new tree. On behalf of those generations who will enjoy the shade of this new tree, we thank the families for their gift.

Sveiki, Madam President

Several folks in the neighborhood were surprised on a Sunday in early March to see a convoy of black limousines pull up to the Latvian Lutheran Church on Irving Street. It turns out that the President of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, escorted by members of the the U. S. Secret Service, decided to make a surprise visit to the congregation. According to Church Administrator Gunta Voldins, the Latvian President was in Washington to meet with Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and also had business in Boston.

Babbling Brook to Babble Better

You may have noticed the orange construction fencing in Olmsted Park. The \$300,000 restoration work has begun. Over the next few weeks the crews will be clearing overgrowth, defining the streambed and resetting stones. See our website for some photos.

Pinebank Update

Residents from Brookline and Jamaica Plain are continuing their efforts to gain support from historic organizations, the arts community and Boston City Councilors. For more information see www.pinebank.org and send an email to Hugh Mattison at hmmattison@aol.com to get involved. Pinebank could be a great resource for our neighborhood. Please help.

Walnut Street Traffic Calming Update

The Town completed the reconstruction of Walnut Street in 2000 but the HSHA has been frustrated in its attempts to get a proper assessment of the safety, aesthetics and effectiveness of the traffic calming measures. We felt strongly that the Town needed to understand what was done well and what was done in error before Town funds were spent on traffic calming elsewhere. In November 2004, after residents walked the street with the chair of the Transportation Board and again with the Town's Director for Transportation, we were promised a report. Finally, a few weeks ago, we received a report entitled "Walnut Street Traffic Calming Evaluation" by Town-hired consultants BETA Group dated October 2003 (see www.highstreethill.org for the whole report). Frankly, we were dumbfounded to learn that a study that detailed the very issues that we had identified had existed for more than 2 years.

After considerable deliberation the HSHA board decided to set aside its chagrin and focus on finding substantive answers to our questions about the project. We arranged a meeting between TMM's Rob Daves, Andy Olins and Tom Elwertowski and DPW Commissioner Tom DeMaio, Director of Engineering Peter Ditto, Assistant Director for Transportation David Friend and the Chair of the Transportation Board Michael Sandman. A number of actions were decided, some short term, some longer term.

Commission DeMaio also agreed to attend our Annual Meeting to answer any further questions residents may have.

Short Term Actions

Excess Signage- HSHA to review existing signs for need and/or redundancy and report back to the Town to check need for each Handicapped Parking sign and remove if not needed

Raised Cross Walks- Town to repair raised cross walks to bring into compliance with current standards. Work to be done under Town's sidewalk maintenance contract late spring/early summer

Crosswalks- Town to check the need for the northernmost crosswalk on on Walnut Street at Oakland Road and remove if not needed

Painting- Town to repaint roadway lines, crosswalks and legends

Long Term Actions

Lines of Sight- Town to check lines of sight at the intersection of Walnut and Irving Streets (from Irving Street) and Walnut and Upland. Will reconfigure neckdowns and parking lanes to safest condition.

Physical Dimensions- Town to look at parking and lane layout within the confines of the physical dimensions of Walnut Street

Assessment- Town to reevaluate traffic calming devices after the Walnut/Kennard/Chestnut traffic calming work is completed

Planting Donation

The High Street Hill Association has taken great pride in Brookline's restoration of Olmsted Park in the last few years. To continue this improvement, the HSHA Executive Board has voted a donation of \$500 to be used, with a matching \$500 from the Town, for purchase of shrubs and plant material for the area of Olmsted Park between Allerton Street and Highland Road.



We would like to thank Tree Planting Committee member Hugh Mattison and Parks & Open Space Director Erin Chute Gallentine for working out the details to make this neighborhood/Town partnership possible.

The donation will be used for plants only and Hugh has offered to organize a neighborhood planting day sometime this spring. If you would like to volunteer please email Hugh at hmattison@aol.com.

Traffic Light at Kennard and Chestnut

In May 2004, after a child was hit by a car at the intersection of Walnut Street and Kennard Road near Lincoln School, the Transportation Board voted to install a pedestrian-activated traffic light. And on March 13, after reviewing a consultant's report, they changed their position and decided instead to install flashing yellow warning lights suspended from a mast.

Now many residents are concerned that the proposed solution is based on limited data and does not adequately address the inherent dangers present at the Walnut intersection. Also, they feel a flashing light is not supported by the school crossing standards. Others are troubled that a large overhanging warning device will be a visual blight on a historic neighborhood.

TMM Lenore von Krusenstiern is leading an appeal to review the decision and one based primarily on an analysis of the technical data and traffic regulations has been filed with the Selectmen. Contact Lenore or one of the other Precinct 5 TMM's to state your concerns.

Save the Dates:

Wednesday, April 19, 6:30PM *Public Meeting on Brookline Village MBTA Station Area Improvements*, the Art Institute Conference Room, 10 Brookline Place West

Tuesday, May 2, 7AM to 8PM, *Town Election*, Precinct 5 Votes at Lincoln School

Monday, May 8, 7:30PM *HSHA Board Meeting*, 25 Edgehill Road. We will be discussing the upcoming TM warrants with TMM's. All are invited.

Sunday, June 18, 5PM *HSHA Annual Picnic on the Green*, Philbrick Square