

# HIGHLIGHT

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*The Newsletter of the High Street Hill Association*

*December 2013*

*Join your neighbors*

CHRISTMAS EVE

## CAROLING ON THE "GREEN"

LED BY

CORNELIA MCMURTRIE



DECEMBER 24 AT 5:45PM

PLEASE BRING FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND  
A WIND-PROTECTED CANDLE

For 40 years Cornelia McMurtrie has led Pill Hill families in yuletide song at HSHA's Caroling on the Green. In 1973, soon after moving to Brookline, Cornelia decided she wanted to replicate a holiday tradition she enjoyed as a child in New York City. Together with neighbors Joan Weiss and Mary Dawson, they used a mimeograph at Lincoln School to make 100 songbooks, many of which, now spotted with candle wax, are still in use (Cornelia, who is careful to gather them at the end of the event, says they are "collector's items"). Two highlights of the evening are "The Twelve Days of Christmas," for which the carolers are divided into three groups, and "We Three Kings," featuring three neighborhood soloists, with Hawthorn Road's Chris Gates always singing the part of King Caspar. Incidentally, some in the neighborhood can remember an even earlier time when neighborhood carolers went from house to house.



## Report on Development *from Diana Post, HSHA President*

Dear Neighbors,

There is a lot going on in and around our neighborhood, and I just thought I would let you know of some active development projects/issues in town. If you wish further information, contact me at [dpost@partners.org](mailto:dpost@partners.org) or 617-738-5096.

**Development at 239 Walnut Street.** Last year, a developer purchased the three-family home at 239 Walnut Street and has proposed building two new residential buildings on the side yard. The project is currently under evaluation by a Preservation Commission subcommittee, which last met November 7th. At that meeting, all but one of the 18 residents who attended expressed concerns about the current development plan. While some expressed a strong preference to see the side yard at 239 Walnut St. remain open space, most were in favor of permitting one single-family house of an appropriate size. The developer was asked to come back to the sub-committee with a revised proposal and also indicated a willingness to work with the High Street Hill Association to reach a consensus. No dates have been set for future meetings with the Preservation Commission subcommittee or your neighborhood association.

**Brookline Place Development.** Boston Children's Hospital, owners of 1, 2 and 4 Brookline Place parcels, after putting a hold on plans for an 8 story medical office building at 2-4, is once again considering development, this time for a smaller 8-story structure at 2-4, a six-story addition to the west side of 1 and an expansion the existing four-story parking garage to seven stories for a total of 832 parking spaces (instead of very expensive underground

parking originally proposed). A Brookline Place Advisory Committee, along with two subcommittees, has been set up to work with the developer's proposal. A Finance Subcommittee will test the larger question of whether all above-ground parking is a requirement for any financially feasible redevelopment at the site and a Planning Subcommittee will look at site layout, massing, number of parking spaces, curb cuts, uses, etc. The Children's presentation has been uploaded to the website at <https://sites.google.com/site/2bplac>, under Background Information. Incidentally, adjacent 10 Brookline Place, home of the Art Institute and Dana Farber offices, just sold to Clarion Partners for \$121 million. What this sort of economic pressure means for future development on our borders deserves attention.

**The Red Cab site on Rt 9.** A development company has proposed building an extended-stay hotel on the site. A proposal for the long-vacant site was reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals last month, and the Design Advisory Team, Planning Board and Transportation Board are involved as well. The proposal includes a 5-story building, which would slope down to 2-3 stories on the side facing White Place, meeting the design parameters for the "sky plane" concept developed last year to limit shadows on the adjacent residences. The developers hope to get the permits to construct the hotel and start work in spring of next year.

If you are interested in development in your neighborhood, get involved! **You can receive email notifications of town meetings by signing up through BrookOnline. Check under the category "Town Committee & Meeting Notifications". The link to BrookOnline is [www.brooklinema.gov/brookonline](http://www.brooklinema.gov/brookonline).**

# SURVEY SAYS...

Last spring we sent out a survey to the neighborhood to get your input to help guide our association. It went out via email to 150 members on our list and a paper version was also delivered to all of the approximately 350 front doors in the neighborhood. Most of the 50 responses returned self-identified as HSHA members. We asked you to rank from 1 to 5 with 1 being the most important.

# #1

– average rank of 1.94 (out of 5), 18 #1 rankings, no # 5 rankings

**MAINTAINING GREEN-SPACES AND STREETSCAPES** - Ensuring that the neighborhood's green spaces and street trees/ plantings are properly cared for, improving street signage, plaques and misc. permanent fixtures.

Related comment: *"Could the [HSHA] take more interest in the Boston side of Olmsted Park? It is neglected, other than Daisy Field, with fallen branches, erosion, and broken glass. The rebuilding of Ward's Pond boardwalk is a good capital improvement but maintenance is lacking."*

– rank of 2.35, 14 #1 rankings, no # 5 rankings

# #2

**ADVOCATING ON TOWN HALL ISSUES** -

Working together with elected officials on matters relevant to our neighborhood, particularly in the area of safety, traffic, and street work.

Related comments: *"Let's defeat the proposal to have the multi-families built on the Walnut Street lot..."*

*I am concerned about two intersections - 1) Upland Rd/ Irving/Allerton. There are no stop signs and many small children in our neighborhood 2) Left turn from Irving on to Walnut Street - there is very little visibility/very dangerous.."*

*"I am opposed to economic development to increase tax base."*

# #3

- rank of 2.6, 16 #1 rankings, 4 # 5 rankings

**UPHOLDING HISTORIC PRESERVATION** - Working with

neighbors and the Preservation Commission to ensure appropriate design oversight, processes and procedures regulating improvement projects

Related Comments:

*"Historic preservation is very important to us, but we feel like it is well-managed via the Historic Commission, allowing HSHA to devote more energy to other priorities where HSHA may be more needed."*

*"The HSHA should NOT get involved in "ensuring appropriate design oversight, process and procedures and regulating improvement projects." That's the job of the Preservation Commission. The HSHA should be a community builder, not a source of community friction...."*

*"I am supportive of Historic Preservation but they need to tone down their rhetoric."*

– rank of 3.13, 8 #1 rankings, 2 #5 rankings

# #4

**ORGANIZING SOCIAL EVENTS & FOSTERING COMMUNITY** - Helping

connect/introduce old & new neighbors, hosting events for all age groups and promoting spirit of community and goodwill.

Favorite events mentioned: June/Father's Day Picnic (7), Walnut St Walking tour /Garden Tour (6), Annual Meeting (3), Caroling on the Green, Events "recognizing the talents of residents-musicians,authors,artists," HSHA Musicale.

## OTHER COMMENTS:

*"I would like to see the High Street Hill association become more actively involved with the entire neighborhood not just Pill Hill."*

*"Wonderful organization, enjoy the updates."*

*"Thank you for all of your hard work on the neighborhood's behalf."*

*"I send in checks that do not get cashed, In addition, I am paid up for years in advance and yet get an annual notice to pay my dues. There is a disconnect here."*

# #5

– rank of 4.1, 1 #1 rankings, 26 #5 rankings)

**PROVIDING YEARLY SUPPORT TO LOCAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS** -

Making donations in the name of the HSHA to groups who directly serve our neighbors of all ages and income levels.

(HSHA has contributed to Steps to Success, Fairsted, The Teen Center, Olmsted Park plantings, etc)