

## November 30<sup>th</sup> Inman Meeting

First, a big “thank you!” to everyone who came to our first neighborhood association meeting and to those who could not make it but sent us emails expressing a desire to be involved. Our email list stands at over 75 fantastic, engaged Inman neighbors and growing.

There were a few broad ideas that created the impetus for starting a neighborhood association: we are interested in getting to know more of our neighbors, we want to advocate for our neighborhood with the local governments and departments, and we want to support our unique, local commercial district.

After we went around the room introducing ourselves, we checked in on a few select issues on which the founding team had already been working.

- 1. Working with the Business Association.** Susan Markowitz explained that the initial idea to create a neighborhood association came out of work that several residents were doing with the (former) Inman Square Business Association. Specifically, we are concerned that our commercial district has lost valuable businesses like Stellabella, undermining the vitality of the Square and the opportunities for residents to interact. Thus, one of our early activities will be establishing a working relationship with our local businesses and with East Cambridge Business Association (with which the Inman Square Business Association is merging), which will cover our area all the way down to North Point Park.
- 2. Beautification.** Richard Krushnic explained the history of his and Susan’s work to install flower planters in front of local stores. Up to now, the businesses have provided the money for materials and he and Susan have provided the labor. They are happy to have volunteers. We will also be looking at locations for tree plantings, hanging flower baskets, and East Cambridge (and Inman Square) Business Association has offered to participate in some of these efforts.

There is a general concern that Velluci Plaza is not living up to its potential; Phyllis Bretholtz suggested that we could model the plaza after Lafayette Plaza (Central Square) by installing seating, chess tables and better landscaping, so that people feel invited to sit and linger.

- 3. New Green Line Station.** Mark Jensen, a volunteer with expertise in transportation infrastructure, has been working with the team on preparing us for the arrival of the Green Line Extension in Somerville (2018-2020?). We predict that the station on Prospect near Webster will significantly change pedestrian bike and foot traffic through our neighborhood. As Mark points out, all of Inman Square is within a 10 walk of that station. But, the station’s position over the Somerville line means that little to no thought has been given to the effects on this side City line. As a first effort toward rectifying that, Mark has helped us to draw up a draft resolution we will bring to

Cambridge City Council and to the MBTA's Financial Management & Control Board. The resolution would ask that the name of the station be "Union Square – Inman Square." This, we hope, will help bring some of the benefits of the station to our commercial district while we wrestle with the traffic flow and parking challenges likely to come. Let us know if you have contacts in Union Square so that we can start the discussion with them before this becomes an effort to "steal" Somerville's hard-won T station! We will also be looking for letters of support once our resolution is brought forward next month. Please contact Mark at [maj02138@gmail.com](mailto:maj02138@gmail.com) for more information.

- 4. The Inman Intersection.** Phyllis Bretholtz presented on a meeting she, Susan Markowitz, Richard Krushnic and Mark Jensen had last week with Joe Barr and Patrick Baxter of the Cambridge Transportation and Parking Department to discuss the Department's plans for the Inman intersection beyond the current "no left turn" rules. Currently, the City has two other proposals besides the one now in place. We were told that the Department is very enthusiastic to have a neighborhood group to engage with on this question and that plans are far from finalized. In fact, our best opportunity for shaping the plan is to show up at a mid-January meeting (TBD), at which time the proposal should be about 25% of the way done. The three current proposals include "bending" either Cambridge or Hampshire before the intersection. We were interested in the possibility that at least one of those proposals would also create a significant new area of open pedestrian space in front of Punjabi Dhaba. The final plan for the intersection is set to be finished a little over a year from now. The Boston Cyclists Union has put forward an alternative proposal to those from the city: <http://bostoncyclistsunion.org/activism/the-inman-square-peanutabout-birth-of-an-innovative-design-solution/>. Please contact Mark Jensen at [maj02138@gmail.com](mailto:maj02138@gmail.com) for more information.

**What are we called?** Amy Witherbee briefly introduced some ideas about our name and affiliation. The initial team has put forward the idea that we refer to ourselves as Inman Village to capture the stronger sense of community we want to encourage here. We will discuss the merits of this idea in future meetings. Amy also updated us on some deliberations we are beginning on whether we should file as a separate legal entity or work under the "umbrella" of one of our complementary community associations. Whatever our designation, we plan to work closely with the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association, the Neighborhood Association of East Cambridge and the Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Association.

**Your Concerns.** We heard some transportation-related suggestions – for making Inman safer for pedestrians, easing traffic speed on Antrim Street in the mornings, and preventing traffic from using Springfield as a cut-through into the Square. We heard fears that transportation planning has focused too much on getting people safely *in and out* of the square, with little attention to residents who are moving around *in* the square. We also heard about the need for more family-friendly destinations in our square and a more complete, local food market for resident use. We have added these to concerns those raised previously and in emails and attached that list.

And you can find @inmansquare on Facebook here:

<https://www.facebook.com/inmansquare/?fref=ts>. Thank you, Laurin Stoler for your (longtime) work on that page!

## What Are Our Concerns?

- The Prospect Street T stop (in Somerville)
- Bike Safety
- The Hampshire/Cambridge Street Intersection proposal
- What does it mean to be an association? How does ours intersect with Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association?
- Where are the boundaries of our association?
- Should we call ourselves a village? How can we make the Square more harmonious?
- How do we improve access to the center of the square? How or whether to address the parking challenges and lack of T stop?
- How does our neighborhood fit into its context (the city, adjacent neighborhoods), especially with regard to economic activity?
- How do we create reasons for people to linger in the Square? How do we get neighbors to congregate in the Square?
- How do we make Vellucci Plaza more pleasant and functional?
- Where can we find more open/park space?
- How do we make the Square friendly to locals walking their dogs/ chatting with one another?
- How might we push for more frequent runs from the 69 Bus?
- How do we encourage/help businesses to create a draw for young families (referencing Stellabella's successes under its first owner)?
- How do we encourage bikers to come through the Square and to stop?
- What do we do about the increase in rats Cambridge?
- Could businesses in the Square "share" parking lots, as is done in other cities?
- Could we ask the city to use bold, painted areas to delineate street parking, crossings and hydrant zones more clearly?
- Can we get more "caution, children crossing" signs and better placed signs for drivers entering the square?
- Can we have traffic lights at the main intersection timed to stop all traffic for pedestrians to cross?
- Can we do something about the rats?
- How do we slow/manage traffic on Antrim and Springfield?