

THE BALLARDVALE GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALLARDVALE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

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BallardVale, Massachusetts

November 2008

Playground Update

In an agreement with Bill Perkins, developer of BallardVale Crossing, a limited and specific amount of money set aside from the sale of units in the Chapter 40B BallardVale Crossing project, constructed adjacent to the MBTA tracks in BallardVale center, would be earmarked toward much-needed improvements to the local playground. The playground currently has a small ball field, an area with playing equipment such as slides and swings, a basketball court and picnic tables. In the August 2008 issue of the BallardVale Gazette, input was solicited from residents and readers regarding improvements to the playground in BallardVale center.

The first gathering to discuss improvements and changes to the playground was held during the BVHD Commission's regular meeting on Wednesday, November 5. The BVHD Commission, local landscape architect Chris Huntress (principal of Huntress Associates), members of Andover's Commission on Disability and several residents of BallardVale were on hand to participate. Huntress presented preliminary drawings and plans to Commission members and others in attendance. He also shared several suggestions for playground improvements emailed to him from BallardVale residents which included: the creation of parking; a skateboard surface; closure of holes in the fence running parallel to the train tracks; the addition of more play equipment for toddlers, a horizontal slide ("zip line") and a wooden climbing structure; and a space for ice skating in the winter.

The addition of recreational equipment at the playground has been informal and the grounds offer no access. Any changes to the playground will necessitate updates and changes concerning accessibility. Justin Coppola, Sr., Chair of Andover's Commission on Disability, offered suggestions for accessibility. Recommendations included: accessible parking; wheelchair access into the playground; a hard-surfaced path wide enough to accommodate wheelchair access to all of the equipment; wheelchair accessible picnic tables; and overall compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Discussion was informal and productive. A realistic view of the playground was taken, acknowledging that its small size (approximately 2 acres) is both limiting and advantageous. It is a good-sized space without being overwhelming. It's central to the area and kids can walk to it. The playing field, too small for Little League games, provides a space for the 10-and-under T-ball teams. A play area focused for 2-5 year olds could be designed adjacent to a 5-12 year old area. A circular path, like that in the Balmoral Street neighborhood, could be considered for an all-age walking path. Paths that meander throughout the playground and to play equipment would address the need for accessibility as well as recreation. The addition of benches and landscaping would also make the playground a nice place to simply sit and relax.

A second meeting about the playground will be held on Wednesday, December 3, during the regular BallardVale Historic District

Commission meeting in the 2nd floor conference room of Town Offices at approximately 8:00pm. The meeting is open to the public and participation is encouraged.

Fire Station Future

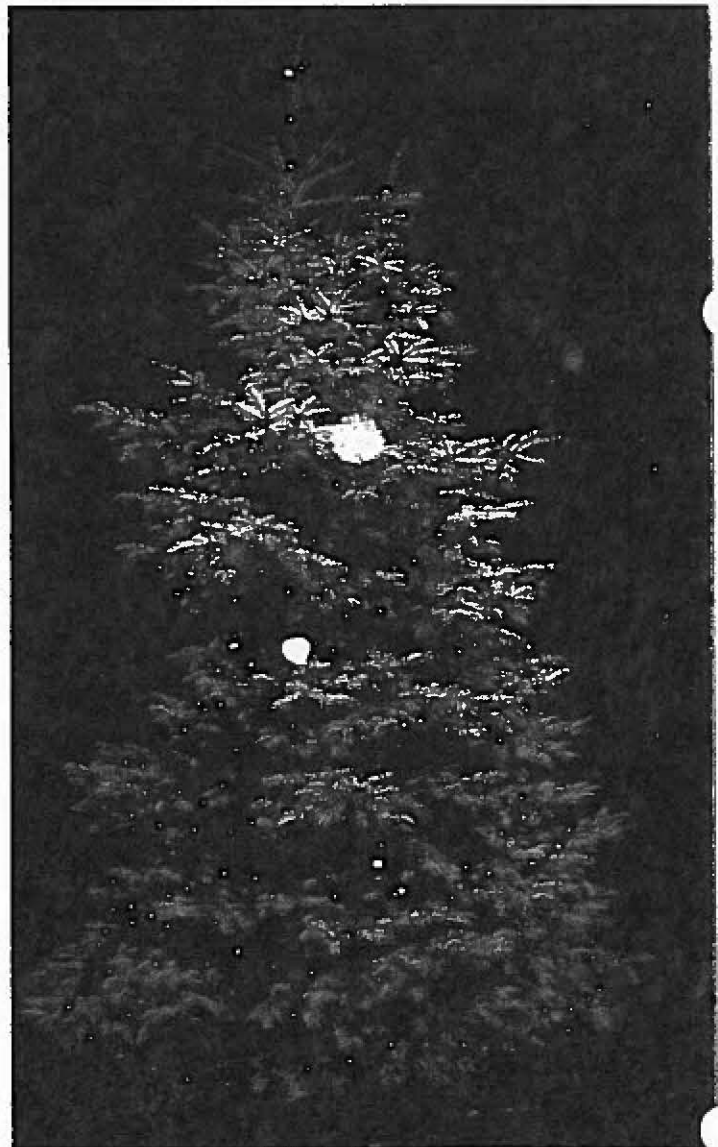
A seven-member committee is being assembled by Andover's Town Manager regarding the need for updating BallardVale's fire station. With the likelihood that it will take five years to complete, the committee will conduct a feasibility study, find a replacement site and work with architects and engineers to develop and design a new station. The membership currently in place reflects a variety of experience, talent and viewpoints: James Ash, engineer; Dan Caspar, attorney and BallardVale resident; James Curtis, engineer with a business located in BV; John Kiely, real estate developer; George Thompson, Jr., retired fire fighter; and Emily Samansky, attorney and BV resident. A seventh and final member has yet to be named. Where a new station will be located is clearly a major component of the committee's work. What will happen to the current fire station at the intersection of Andover Street and Clark Road is uncertain.

The committee will begin work in earnest in January 2009. Open meetings will be held to solicit input from residents; the schedule for these has not been determined. Check the local paper for information.

Winter Comes to the Vale

The annual tree lighting on the BallardVale Green will be held on Sunday, December 7 at 5:00pm. Join with neighbors and friends for some holiday fun and singing. Dress warmly and bring your singing voices and holiday spirit. Carol singing will be led by Brian "Bella Voce Forte" Major. Dogs are welcome, but please bring them on a leash. Refreshments will be provided by the BallardVale Historic District Commission.

And don't forget to help your neighbors and the local fire department by adopting a fire hydrant! Locate the fire hydrant, or hydrants, nearest your home and remove snow from the area with each snowfall. Clear a 3' circle around the hydrant so that all the ports are accessible. Remember to clear a path to the street for the fire hose --- the build-up of heavy icy snow from snowplows can make hydrants difficult to reach. Alternate the job of shoveling with a neighbor or join forces to make short work of it! Adopt a hydrant and keep it accessible. Help the fire department keep your home and BallardVale safe this winter.

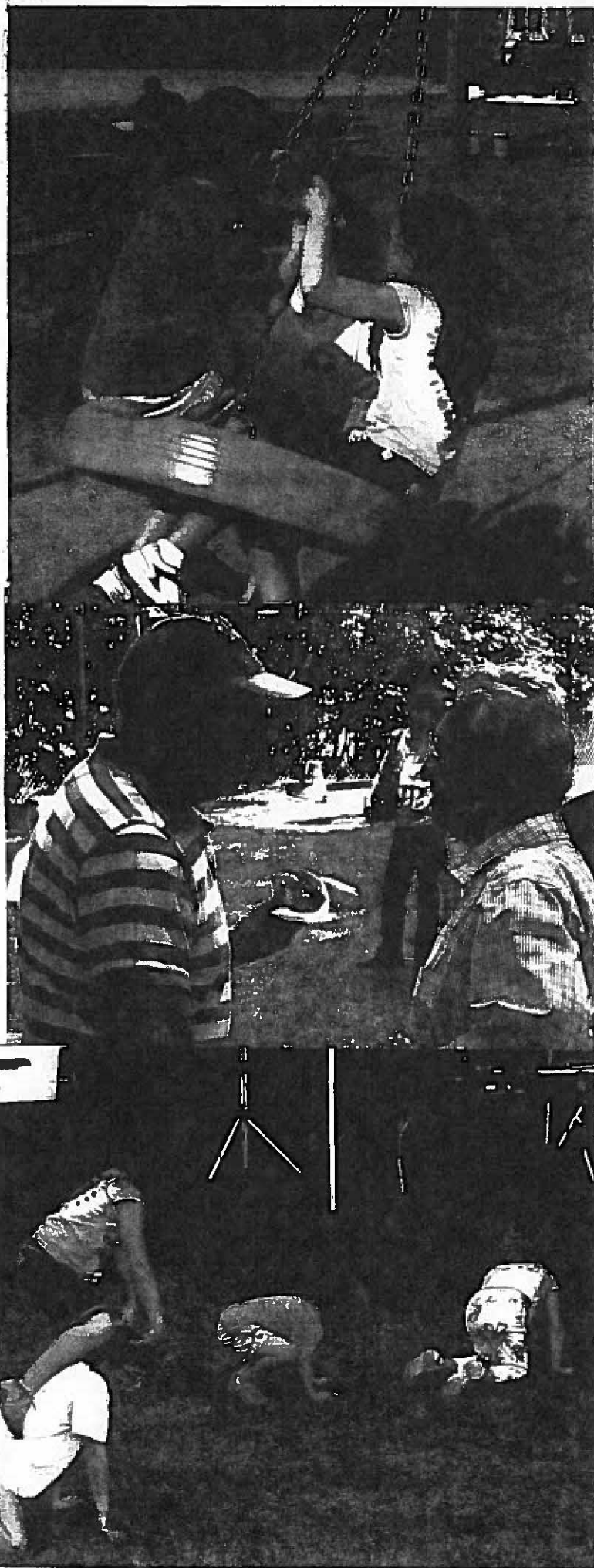


Senior Center

The Andover Senior Center has recently acquired a 12-passenger bus thanks to a Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) grant which covered 80% of the purchase. The transportation program has focused on providing "group" rides; that is, picking seniors up and returning them to one location. A shopping plan, with regularly scheduled trips to area grocery stores (DeMoulas and Stop & Shop) as well as monthly trips to Kohl's, Wal-Mart and the Christmas Tree Store is being developed. They need to hear from you. Where would you like to go? A survey is enclosed in the December *News and Views* newsletter or you may call the Senior Center at 978-623-8321 and speak with Debbie about your transportation needs.

2008 Block Party

Hurricane Hanna brought lots of rain to Massachusetts during the first weekend of September and temporarily washed out the annual BallardVale Block Party. But the following Saturday --- September 13 --- was clear and beautiful, and the party was held without a hitch or threat of rain! Special thanks go to all of the sponsors of the event including Sunday's General Store, BallardVale Café, Spinner's Pizza, Elm Street Automotive, Cronin's Ice Cream, the BallardVale Historic District Commission, Wyeth Biopharma, Sodexho Food Services, Kismet Wellness Center, and F.P.Reilly & Sons. Ziggy the DJ did a great job providing music for games and entertainment and for your listening pleasure!



**BallardVale
Historic District Commission**

*Andover Town Offices
36 Bartlet Street
Andover, MA 01810*

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See you at the Tree Lighting on Sunday, December 7 at 5 pm!

CALENDAR

Dec. 3 (Wednesday)	BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting Town Offices – 2 nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm
Dec. 7 (Sunday)	Annual Tree Lighting at the BallardVale Green – 5:00pm
Jan. 7 (Wednesday)	BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting Town Offices – 2 nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm
Feb. 4 (Wednesday)	BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting Town Offices – 2 nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm
Mar. 4 (Wednesday)	BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting Town Offices – 2 nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm
Apr. 1 (Wednesday)	BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting Town Offices – 2 nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm