

CHARLESTOWN REMEMBERS BILL LAMB

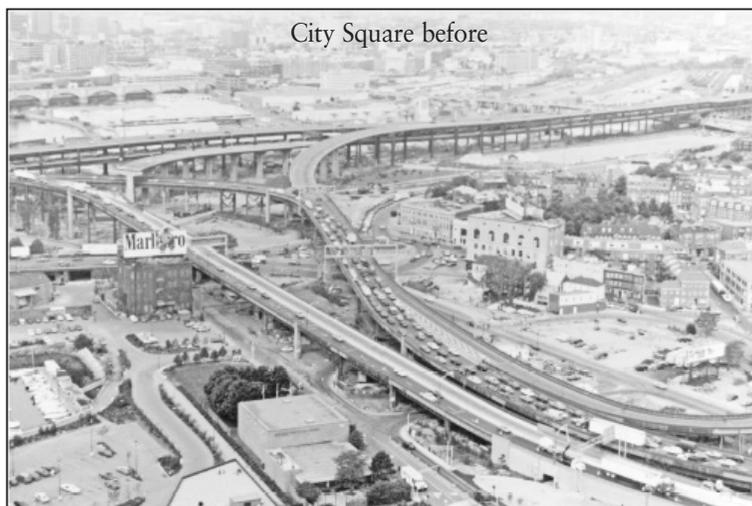
Bill Lamb was an urban visionary. His creativity and persistence led directly to Charlestown's most dramatic improvements in appearance and livability.

In the mid-1970s City Square was crisscrossed by the elevated Orange Line and the Tobin Bridge, leaving virtually nothing remaining of the park that once anchored Charlestown. At lightly-attended public meetings, Bill urged the state to depress part of the bridge in a tunnel beneath City Square to re-emerge away from the core of the neighborhood.

This, Bill argued, would reunite the former park, re-connect Charlestown with the its harbor, open up the entrance to the neighborhood and create community pride and rejuvenation. State officials were skeptical: Charlestown in the '70s seemed an unlikely place for innovative infrastructure improvements. But Bill's logic and quiet drive eventually won them over.

Bill then participated in the successful lobbying efforts of Charlestown's North Area Task Force to obtain Congressional legislation authorizing federal funds for what became the Central Artery North Area project.

It's remarkable that Bill's idea eventually inspired a federal law that opened up \$100 million in national highway funding, made his underground design possible and accomplished his goals for depressing part of the Tobin Bridge.



City Square before

City Square as a transportation corridor/1970 which caused the destruction of Charlestown's community fabric and made it unsafe for pedestrians.

We now have a fabulous park in City Square that is an inviting gateway to Charlestown and a centerpiece of family and civic activity. Bill's farsighted concept enabled City Square to regain the preeminence it enjoyed in the 19th century. It's fair to say that virtually the entire City Square area bears his imprint.

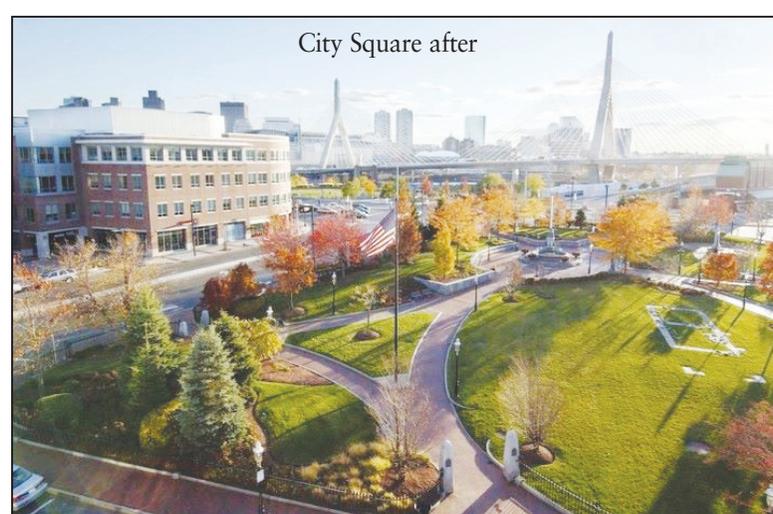
But Bill wasn't finished. As a member of the Bridge Design Review Committee, established to determine how the Central Artery Project -- the Big Dig -- would cross the Charles River, he tirelessly advocated for a Charlestown-friendly design that resulted in the signature Zakim Bridge.

Over the years Bill and I attended hundreds of public meetings. Despite his busy professional practice, he almost never missed a relevant meeting. And while he was

the unquestioned catalyst -- and hero -- of the underground tunnel project, he never acted as though he deserved more credit than other advocates.

Besides his bold big-picture concepts, Bill paid close attention to minute and necessary design details. And notwithstanding the passion of his convictions, I never recall him raising his voice or resorting to intemperate arguments. He relied instead on his mastery of the facts and polite persuasiveness to convince government officials and dubious residents that his positions made sense.

We owe Bill lasting gratitude for helping to will into being the transformation of a key part of our neighborhood. Imagine what Charlestown would feel like if Bill had not pressed for his long-shot



City Square after

City Square today after many years of community advocacy, creating a safe walk-through for pedestrians and a strong business climate.



The entrance to City Square Park.

idea to depress part of the Tobin Bridge -- and the state had simply rebuilt the bridge overhead in City Square. Thank you, Bill, for your imagination and masterful advocacy.

Rich Johnston was co-chairman of the North Area Task Force, a Charlestown representative on the Bridge Design Review Committee, and an original Director of the Friends of City Square Park.

Boston archaeology will forever be indebted to Bill Lamb. His work in the 1970s resulted in the Central Artery passing under and not over City Square, the historic heart of Charlestown and the site of the 1629 John Winthrop Great House.

The archaeological surveys that preceded the tunnel recovered hundreds of thousands of 17th and 18th century artifacts that form the backbone of the City of Boston's archaeological assemblages.

Without Bill's voice we might never have documented the foundations of John Winthrop's house, Grace Parker's 18th century woman-owned pottery, and cannonballs recovered from the charred ruins of buildings burned in the Battle of Bunker Hill.

But Bill did not stop there. He and the Charlestown Preservation Society made possible an archaeological survey of the Charlestown Training Field which documented



The foundation of the John Winthrop house.

multiple historic sites, including a fire house, gun house, historic fountain and two intact pre-1629 Massachusetts Native use areas.

I first met Bill during public talks on Charlestown archaeology. Before I knew he was the Bill Lamb I knew him as the tall, kind gentleman in the audience with the

permanent and encouraging smile.

Bill leaves behind a blueprint for how to contribute to community activism, historic preservation and neighborhood kindness.

~ Joe Bagley is the City Archaeologist for the City of Boston.

“He was a man of integrity, intellect, and gentleness who gifted us time and sincerity. He was a special blessing to Charlestown”

~ Kent Edward, Charlestown resident and CPS Board Member

“Bill Lamb's gift to Charlestown will be seen throughout our community for many generations.”

~ Annette Tecce

“We have a lot to live up to, but he showed us the way.”

~ Margaret Bradley