

It seems I always knew Bill. He was there whenever there was Charlestown business to be done. There is a personal and special admiration I have for him, but this piece is meant to share some of his very gifted public side.

The first place I spent time with Bill along with several other wonderful folks was on the North Area Task Force. It took a while before I realized who was the anchor and inspiration for the task force and who was continually making sure that the “project” would happen. Others will tell the story of Bill’s involvement in the making of the tunnels and bridges that gave us back our town and enhanced it.

Make it happen: that seems to be the phrase that I associate with Bill. To that I add make it happen with class and grace. He did the long and hard work of research, and then he communicated with both the proponents and opponents of an issue.

The issues were all about livable design, buildings and spaces. But in no way did the issues overcome the human side of making it happen. Bill listened really *really* well. He could make it feel as if the task at hand was a lot easier than it appeared, even if it seemed to be quite difficult.

So you will not be surprised when I say that he attended Charlestown Neighborhood Council meetings regularly. He did that as a resident of the town and as chair of the Charlestown Preservation Society Design Review Committee. If you know about these meetings, you know they usually have few residents attending except in cases of particular interest.

What was most important about Bill presenting himself and his comments so regularly was that his dogged pursuit of the best for Charlestown gained a strong voice for the CPS Design Review Committee. The Charlestown Neighborhood Council finally realized the value of the amazing group of architects, designers and residents that Bill drew into that committee and the work they do with regard to development issues in Charlestown.

With Bill’s guidance, the Design Review Committee seeks to engage with neighbors to address neighborhoods. It also reviews the impact of big development on the whole town. It serves as a resource and sounding board for us all. Others will have more to say about this, although I must remind people of a time when the Design Review Committee consisted of Bill and me. I readily tell you that it was not me who kept it going.

One last tidbit: In the late 1990s the Neighborhood Council was occupied with a much-needed rezoning effort that luckily involved some very supportive city agencies. There were public meetings for each of our seven precincts, and the only public that arrived to hear all the debates and speak up for the betterment of our town was none other than our Bill Lamb.

Even if it is now time to redo that effort, it has been a real boon to have had it for the last 20 years. Of course Bill knew all the ins and outs of zoning, and we have benefited mightily from his wisdom and his presence for many years.

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

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