

## **TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS—July 2010**

### **CONTRACTS—Bill Robertson**

#### **FEMA Disaster Aid Update**

Mary Challstrom and I met with Dave Singh of FEMA on Monday July 19<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Singh was provided with the required documentation of expenditures for snow plowing/removal and for debris removal. The information provided covered both the December and February storms. Mr. Singh indicated that because all of our plowing/removal was provided by contractors, the turnaround time of the paper work would be quick. Mr. Singh will coordinate with Mary to meet with her to sign the final papers.

### **McCATHRAN HALL—Bill Robertson**

Nothing to report

### **FORESTRY & BEAUTIFICATION—Georgette Cole**

The Forestry and Beautification Committee meets with Steve Werts Wednesday July 21 to discuss Maintenance work related to our committee. Steve has already talked with several committee members including Maria Montefusco.

I have submitted a blanket permit application to the DNR for work throughout town. The DNR is charged with supervising compliance with Natural Resources Article, § 5-401--5-406, Annotated Code of Maryland. This covers all woody vegetation over 1” in diameter (most trees and bushes) in Town land adjacent to paved roads. The permit will facilitate a safety project to clear lines of sight at our intersections and on some roads that are being narrowed by vegetation. We do not currently have any trees that need attention here, but the permit will cover them as well and is good for one year. Maria Montefusco, who now has her Public Employee Roadside Tree Expert license, will be the certified expert and supervisor for these jobs.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION—Georgette Cole**

The Planning Commission met on July 7.

#### **Building Permits:**

358 Ridge Road: addition of accessory building (studio) in rear yard. HPC review was completed and WG did final signoff on the permit. However, the Tomlins will have to go to Montgomery County for a variance as the County will not issue a permit for an accessory building that is greater than 50% of the lot coverage of the primary structure. The new studio exceeds that by 160sf.

115 Washington Grove Lane: Fence permit (4 foot) with boundary survey was approved.

313 Brown Street resubmitted: Amplified plans for this property were submitted to the commission. All was in order and the PC approval was reiterated.

PC/HPC Work Sessions: The Mansionization Group has split into two new subgroups to formulate the two approaches to present to the next Mansionization Forum. These will be FAR/Max Size Group headed by Georgette Cole and Triggers Group headed by Bob Booher. Sub groups will meet together again on August 25 to finalize the work and set the time for the next Town Forum.

## **LAKE COMMITTEE—Marida Hines**

There were two lake related meetings this month. On July 14 at 7pm, there was a midsummer meeting of the Lake lifeguards with the Lake Committee members in charge of the lifeguards, followed by a meeting of the full Lake Committee at 7:30pm.

In attendance at the lifeguard meeting were John Hutchinson, Marida Hines and Eric Selby of the Lake Committee as well as guards Jack Leng, Svyeta Good, Peter Suzich, Kelley Schreiber, Casey Stalker, and Juan Torreblanca. Walter Spitzer could not make it but was later contacted by phone. Issues addressed included scheduling, lifeguard attire, and complaints.

The schedule was reworked due to gaps caused by one of the guards leaving for personal reasons.

The new "lifeguard" tank tops were passed out to the guards and there was a discussion of policy on wearing them. Guards have agreed to put their names on the back in indelible marker and to wear the shirts if it is not too hot. When not being worn, the shirts will be draped over the chair the guard is in with the name showing. This will allow lake users to identify the lifeguards, and will give an 'official' presence at the lake to inhibit non-residents.

Eric and Marida cited several general and specific complaints they have received about the lifeguards and opened up the topic for discussion. The guards gave their side of the story in the specific instances as well as some more general concerns about lake users' expectations. It became clear that there is some confusion among parents in particular about what the lifeguard's responsibilities are. We discussed some scenarios where the guards must exercise discretion on where to place themselves to monitor swimmers. The conclusions were:

- The safety of the swimmers is paramount
- Guards are responsible for watching people in the water, not on land (unless there is an infraction of lake regulations taking place)
- When any one is in the water, the guards will not be performing any other activity other than watching them
- When swimmers are in the water by the dock, one of the guards will be on the dock or in the water by the dock watching the swimmers
- If children are running on and off the dock but not going in the water, a guard does not have to be on the dock, especially if there are multiple swimmers elsewhere
- Lifeguards are not required to move to the dock for adults diving from the dock, but should use their judgment to ensure they can monitor those swimmers well

The meeting concluded with a reminder from Eric and Marida that we also receive compliments from users about how professional and diligent the lifeguards are.

The full Lake Committee met after the guards meeting. In attendance were John Hutchinson, Marida Hines, Eric Selby, Judy Mrocza, Sally Mansfield, Bruce Rothrock, Karen Lottes, and Tom Land of the Lake Committee. Also in attendance was the new Maintenance Supervisor, Steve Werts, who was there to learn about maintenance issues at the lake.

It was commented that brush has grown up around the number sign at the lake entrance, which is a security issue since the emergency services need it to find the lake.

Much of the time discussing maintenance was spent on how to keep the perimeter fence in good repair and what other techniques can be used to keep out intruders. Steve has already done a temporary repair on the fence where it had fallen down by the spring. He has also extended the cleared area of the path around the far side of the lake as far as he feels he can; beyond that it is

too swampy and brambly to cut a path. Other than repairing the fence when it is cut, it was agreed that the best barriers are brambles and wild roses which are being planted and allowed to proliferate around the perimeter.

A proposal was made to go from a once-yearly lake cleanup to two cleanups. Another suggestion was to form a 'friends of Maple Lake' type group of lake users helping out on a volunteer basis, with a set list of tasks.

Steve was asked about any ideas he might have to solve the ongoing problem of the gate padlock being too difficult to use in dim light situations or by the over-40 crowd due to the numbers being too small. Steve immediately produced a lock that he had in his truck that might well work and had very large numbers.

A large snapping turtle has relocated to the lake and will be left there. Its presence is a sign that the lake is healthy. So long as no one feeds it, it will keep its distance. They are not dangerous if they are not fed.

It was noted that cutrine was added to the lake the previous week to combat algae and rooted pondweed. Steve has everything he needs to do future treatments.

A notice was drafted for the next bulletin, to read:

- The next Lake Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday the 25th (7:30 PM) at McCathran Hall.
- The combination lock has been changed at the lake. To get the new number, please call the Town office, myself, or anyone on the Lake Committee. PLEASE DO NOT pass out the new number to non-Grovers, or children that cannot be trusted to protect this 'secret/private' number. Thank you for your cooperation.
- In response to several requests, we are experimenting with combination locks with more readable numbers that can be more easily read, but have not yet found any satisfactory replacements. If you have any suggestions, please contact John Hutchinson or Bruce Rothrock.

The next Lake Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday August 25th (7:30 PM) at McCathran Hall.

### **RECREATION COMMITTEE—Marida Hines**

The July 21 Recreation Meeting has been cancelled. The Rec. Committee will meet again on Sept 15.

### **WEBSITE—Marida Hines**

I asked for input on issues or potential improvements to the website from committee heads. I have heard nothing except from the Planning Commission, who made several excellent suggestions including:

- They would like all permit application materials available on the website as PDFs – no longer should applicants have to submit a request form to get these materials
- They would like to be able to post a basic public notice for town residents prior to our PC meetings just so folks know about...
  - Any active permits (permits that have been issued and are “under construction)
  - Any permit applications (to be reviewed and voted on by PC)
  - Notice of permit decisions by PC (approve, denial, BZA appeals, etc.)
- Past notices – they would like an archive of these public notices either with, or separately from (probably more efficient) past PC meeting minutes and agendas.

- Basic Permit Database – this is kind of an off-shoot of the specific public notices, but this would be kind of an overall list of all permit activity to date
- Special Notices / HOT issues: For things like the upcoming joint forum on mansions or other processes where public participation is encouraged or required (proposed ordinances, etc.), we'd like to have a fairly obvious "News/Issues" spot on the website where folks could get additional information
- Contact information by committee member/assignment
- From a "flow" perspective, it would be great if the PC could have a dedicated page of the website for all issues. This not only helps town residents understand what's going on, but would also help PC members stay organized and have an on-call informational resource of all past, present and future activity.

Over the coming 2-3 months I will be contacting committee heads personally to see about getting more suggestions of this kind. It may become obvious that some simple changes could make the website a better resource for the Council and for residents. If so, I will formulate suggestions and present them to the Council and to the webmaster.

### **MAINTENANCE—Joe Clark**

Steve Werts began as the new Maintenance Supervisor on July 6, 2010. He has done very well in the first two weeks.

Each day he begins by checking the walkways and the lake for any problems and picks up trash. Much of his time has been spent on clearing intersections for improved sight-lines, concentrating on improving safety for automobiles. Chestnut Road from McCauley to Brown Street & Railroad has been cleared. Also, along Grove Road, intersections have been cleared.

Following the 4<sup>th</sup> of July festivities, the flags, picnic tables and grill were returned to storage, Woodward Park mowed, the mowing equipment was serviced and tree limbs removed in the area where the SITP campers were playing.

Clearing along walkways has begun, beginning along Oak Ave. Woodward Park, Morgan, Railroad Park, Wade and Town Circle were mowed, trimmed and cleaned up, weeds trimmed and debris picked up and taken to the Transfer Station (4 trips)

Work has begun on the main drainage swale along the west side of Woodward Park. Drainage areas under Grove Road & Center and Grove Road and McCauley area were cleared.

Lake issues have been handled to work to control algae. More time than expected has been spent getting supplies for the lake and equipment.

Steve Werts has had several meetings with Town committees (Lake, Forestry and Beautification) and individuals (Town Treasurer, Clerk, three Council members) to get acquainted with expectations and gain a better understanding of the scope of his work. He also has become more familiar with the budget and the constraints it places on the work to be done. Already, there is the realization that the amount of work is more than one person can accomplish in a 40 hours work week.

Work has begun on restoring the Town nursery area and moving along the back side of Woodward Park. Also, work has begun to fill the gator bags for the younger trees. Some trees which fell in the paths of the east woods were removed (in the vicinity of McCauley and Center).

Finally, care is being taken to schedule for budget and time, the work to be done. Major projects such as streets and other temperature sensitive projects will be scheduled accordingly. Some major projects could be scheduled for the winter months (drainage, McCathran Hall, Maintenance garage) and some projects can only be scheduled as budget allows (tennis courts). The hope is that work can be more evenly distributed over the 12 months of the year, adjusting for seasonal demands and the scope of work. It is expected that this way the important work will be completed and the urgent work will be taken care of in good time.

#### **ROADS AND WALKWAYS—Joe Clark**

Because Steve Werts has just begun, no work has been done on either streets or walkways. However, ten roadway areas have been identified as possible areas for repaving and five areas identified for additional gravel for parking.

I will present to the Council in late August or early September, depending on the agenda flexibility, a set of criteria (proposed) by which the town can prioritize projects. This will assist greatly in budgeting for the next few years which streets get immediate attention.

#### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca**

There is no new information to report during this period

#### **PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca**

I invited Eagle Playground Systems to provide a review of existing playground apparatus and a recommendation to future upgrades in playground apparatus for 2012 budget. Their observations mirror the town Insurance provider report. Eagle has become a well known entity in Maryland and Virginia for playground and park planning... Steve Wertz was able to join us for walk through and his expertise and mechanical knowledge was very evident. I am confident that Steve’s recommendations regarding fencing and related apparatus will result in extending the use and safety of some vintage and much loved items. Prior to the 2012 budget I will be presenting a recommendation and plan for preservation of certain items that will coincide with new apparatus recommendations.

#### **MEMORIALS—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca**

No recent requests have been made. I will make myself available to any town citizen interested in discussing memorials with our town.

#### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION—Sylvie Favret**

No report.

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT—Sylvie Favret**

No report.