

## **COUNCIL REPORTS**

### **May 2014**

#### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION – Georgette Cole**

Town Council Report: Georgette expressed her desire as council liaison that the HPC move ahead with a next phase of anti-mansionization. She reported the Council had discussed the proposed budget ordinance and new county legislation. The Town will exempt itself from the new Chapter 8 and 19 legislation as this is already covered by our Forestry ordinances. The Council also discussed proposed ordinance No. 2014-03 relating to granting easements to Town property owners (8 known instances) whose main buildings are partially on Town property. As requested by the Mayor and Planning Commission, the Town Attorney assembled the ordinance in part as a solution to Eva Polson's predicament regarding reconstructing her damaged home, the front porch of which is on town property. The PC has issued Eva a demolition permit.

PC Meeting Report: Georgette also reported the PC discussed the proposed ordinance 2014-03 at its meeting. There will be a public hearing at the June 9 Council Meeting and the ordinance could be adopted later in the meeting. Georgette and Bob said there was nothing new on the Bridge project. Bridge traffic will be re-routed sometime after school is out.

Houses on Town Property - Proposed Ordinance: The HPC discussed the proposed ordinance, especially with regard to Section 1, No. 2 and the determination of whether reconstruction/replacement plans for homes on Town property had historic integrity and were compatible with the neighborhood. The members agreed there was some ambiguity in the language of the draft ordinance. Who will draft the "quid pro quo" conditions in the easements? Does the granting of the easement trigger review of the plans for work on the whole house, just the part on Town property or the part in non-compliance with setback requirements? The HPC was of the opinion that the HPC should make the determination of whether reconstruction/replacement plans met the historic integrity/compatibility standard and that language to that effect should be added. What if the homeowner wants to make changes NOT associated with damage to the house? What if the planned changes do not affect the part of the house on Town property? It was decided to raise these issues with Joli to take to the Town attorney for clarification and to propose language to remove ambiguity.

Building Permit Procedures HPC FAQ's: Wendy has finalized the FAQ's. They will appear in the June Town bulletin and go into effect June 1, 2014. The HPC discussed the need to update the 2004 HPC procedures and Definitions. Mimi will draft some proposed changes.

Steatite Quarry: The HPC is concerned about the protection of steatite quarries in the meadow. A plan is needed to prevent damage due to planting, landscaping, etc. The sites' boundaries need to be established, so responsible parties can be identified and included in planning. Wendy and David will approach Charlie about locating the quarries on the plat map.

New Business: Bob responded to questions from Nan Aitel-Thompson, who is interested in moving to the Town, about the HPC's review of additions and partial demolitions of homes in the Town.

#### **WASHINGTON GROVE CONSERVATION MEADOW PARK – Georgette Cole**

Don Henninger sent the Council a letter on May 16 covering several issues. One was the failure to answer his previous letter in a timely fashion. The second to suggest the use of dog waste stations in the Conservation Meadow Park. The third is the need to remind residents free-

roaming cats are not allowed in Washington Grove. As Meadow Park liaison I answered Don's letter with an assurance that a new procedure for answering resident communications was now in place. I told him his inquiry about dog waste stations should be addressed to Montgomery County Park Manager, Mike Jones, and said a reminder of animal control regulations would go into the Town Bulletin as soon as possible. Mike Jones answered Don and he says "Conservation parks will have very minimalistic constructed amenities and features, if any at all. That is by design and intent, and hopefully they support or encourage activities in a range that is different from the active based parks. Reading through your email I can't help but think that the "conservation" philosophy hasn't quite been adopted by all the users yet. It may take time, and the meadow is in its relative infancy as far as its new life as a Montgomery County Park is concerned. I'd say the folks who are doing as you mentioned are still seeing WGMCP as an open field just sitting there as open space with a few homeowner cut trails. It may take time and outreach. As the meadow begins to take on more life and appearance of an established park, I would hope the incidents you describe fade away and a new appreciation for what is very near to the Town of Washington Grove takes its place. I think this will take time, and we need to work on this outreach and education together. A good first step is including this as a topic within the community bulletin or at Town Hall meetings. I can also place a "notice" within the Kiosk at the trail head on Ridge Road. To investigate other remedies and alternatives, I sent your email over to a contact I have inside Park Police for their perspective, information, and guidance." In brief, the advice cites Montgomery County regulations concerning picking up dog waste but since these are enforced by MC Park Police or MC police who are not around our Park, Mike's advice is again to work on outreach and education. I put a reminder to pick up after your dog in the June Bulletin section on the Meadow Park; we'll see how that goes. At Mike's request we also put in a reminder that residents are not supposed to mow the park land and birdhouses and birdbaths should be removed.

**Roberts Oxygen Truck Parking Informational Update:** Our research into truck parking next to our residents at 3 Ridge Road and on the 500 block of Brown Street shows the current parking is legal and considered safe. I asked our contact at Roberts Oxygen, Mr. Dave Mason, if the parking might be rearranged as nearby residents had expressed concern about the safety of having large tanks near them. Mr. Mason says the decision was made so trucks were rarely moved were next to the residences in order to minimize movement and noise. They are trying to be a good neighbor. He says "The carbon dioxide tank and the argon tanks are parked there empty. There are no oxygen trailers parked in that area. The helium tanks (which I'm sure you are aware helium is lighter than air) will be empty, full or partials. The nitrogen tank is also either empty, full or partial. Leaks are not a concern if the tank is empty and when full or partially full, there are multiple safety devices engineered into the tanks designs (all types) to prevent unplanned discharges. I would recommend that you research on the Compressed Gas Association website for more information regarding the pressure containment devices the industry uses. We are proud members of CGA." I am working on a letter to the nearby neighbors with this information.

#### **SHADY GROVE CROSSING – Georgette Cole**

Nothing to report.

#### **FORESTRY – Audrey Maskery**

**Forestry and Beautification:** Stadler Nursery planted one native Redbud, one native Holly, one Serviceberry (clump form), and one Service Berry (tree form). This finishes the current tree planting in Political Hill area of Wade Park. The dead White Oak planted last fall by Stadler will

be removed next month. A replacement tree will be planted next fall under Stadler's one year warranty.

Woods Group:

Chair: Ann Briggs

A Forest Management Plan currently in draft form will be presented to the Town Council when finalized. The plan once passed by the Town Council, will be sent to Forest Consultants licensed in Maryland. The Town will be inviting proposals to analyze the two (2) Forest Reserves – East Woods and the West Woods, to determine current status of the forests and determine their long-term health and survival.

**MEMORIALS – Audrey Maskery**

Nothing to report.

**MCCATHRAN HALL – John McClelland**

The exterior of the windows in McCathran Hall are currently being painted.

**PLANNING COMMISSION – John McClelland**

Nothing to report.

**MAPLE LAKE - Carolyn Rapkivian**

The life guards were fully scheduled: two lifeguards on duty every day throughout the summer. They will be on duty on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) between Memorial Day and when school lets out (June 13). On June 13 and thereafter, they will be on duty every day through Labor Day (September 1). Their hours of duty will be from 12 - 6pm. The swim instructor was also lined up and the combination on the lock was changed.

The algae and pondweed are bad and are being treated. The next Lake Committee Meeting will be Thursday June 19th.

**SAFETY – Carolyn Rapkivian**

Residents raised the issue of speeding cars in Town. The problem and potential solutions will be discussed at the June Council Meeting.

**WEBSITE – Carolyn Rapkivian**

The survey data was analyzed and along with webmaster Bill Saar, residents Marida Hines, Mark Dubnick, and Christine Dibble were contacted to advise and assist with choosing a new website platform as well as organizing and migrating the content.

**ROADS AND WALKWAYS – Bill Robertson**

The lower Ridge Road paving project was completed.

**MAINTENANCE – Bill Robertson**

Grass is growing fast....nothing else to report.

**CONTRACTS – Greg Silber**

Contracts are running smoothly. Potomac Disposal continues to make regular recycling and trash pick-ups.

**RECREATION COMMITTEE – Greg Silber**

Registration and planning and sign-ups for Summer in the Parks is underway. The schedule for the 13-15 June Music Weekend has been established. Plans are underway for the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration. The Recreation Committee will meet again on Wednesday 16 July at 7:30 p.m.

**PLAYGROUNDS – Greg Silber**

The Council has established a Playground Committee which will study, and then make recommendations to the Mayor and Council regarding, possible changes and improvements to the Woodward Park playground equipment.