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Town Council News

Next meeting: Monday » 01.14.08 @ 7:30 p.m. & Monday » 01.28.08 @ 7:30 p.m. in Council Room. The public is invited to attend.

Actions at the December 10th Council meeting included:

appointment of Melissa Yachup as the Planning Commission alternate.
approval to accept grant money from Montgomery County for the Historic Preservation Commission's historical marker project in Morgan Park.

2

Tax Reminder - Washington Grove - 1612

Please fill in Washington Grove 1612 in the appropriate box on your State income tax form. If someone else prepares your tax forms, include this notice with your tax information and if you file electronically; be sure to select Washington Grove under City, Town, or Taxing Area. This DOES NOT increase your taxes, but DOES help ensure that the Town receives its proper share of local income tax revenue. Thanks for your help!

3

Planning Commission News

Next meeting: Wednesday » 02.06.07 @ 7:30 p.m. in Council Room.
The public is invited to attend.

4

Building Permits

If you are going to erect a building or structure (including fences), make structural alterations to, or move any existing building or other structure, you must first obtain a building permit from the Washington Grove Planning Commission. The Town zoning ordinance governs setbacks, lot coverage and height. Applications are available at the Town Office at 301-926-2256. The permit fee is \$10.00, payable to the Town of Washington Grove. Interior renovations, which involve electrical, plumbing, or load-bearing changes, generally require a County permit. A shed requires a County permit as well. The Town must first sign off all applications for County-required building permits. The Historic Preservation Commission will review most permits as well.

5

WANTED...

Planning Commission Secretary The PC Secretary takes the minutes at the monthly meetings and prepares them for approval at the next meeting. The time involved is approximately 4 hours per month and the pay is \$11.50 per hour. If you are interested, please call the Town Office, 301-926-2256.

6

Reminder... Temporary Use Permit Required

Please remember that if you plan to place a portable/moving container or trash container of over one cubic yard capacity on private or public property in the Town of Washington Grove, you must obtain a Temporary Use Permit from the Town Office. There is no fee for this permit. They are good for 90 days.

7

Comments Invited on Master Plan

tb200801

The update of the Town's Master Plan continues, and the Second Draft will be posted and available on the Town's website by January 15th. This version reflects the work of the nine Focus Groups as then modified at Planning Commission work sessions over the last year. The Planning Commission will host a listening session on Wednesday, February 6, starting at 7:00 pm, in the Council Room at McCathran Hall, to hear comments on this Second Draft. Comments may also be directed to Charlie Challstrom at chacha4498@yahoo.com or to Charlie at P.O. Box 271 prior to February 6. After hearing these comments, the Planning Commission will complete its recommended version and schedule the required public hearing.

8

Historic Preservation News

Next meeting: Tuesday » 01.15.08 @ 7:30 p.m. in Council Room.

The public is invited to attend.

9

Historic Marker for Morgan Park

The HPC is proposing to place a historic marker plaque near the entrance to the Town near the intersection of Grove Road and Brown Street in Morgan Park. The memorial would consist of a plaque stating some important events in the history of Washington Grove. The plaque would be made of bronze and would be affixed to a 4 ft. tall by 5 ft. wide by 3 ft. deep granite stone. The stone would weigh approximately 1.5 - 2 tons and would be supported by a deep bed of gravel. The HPC would appreciate any comments or suggestions positive or negative on this project. Please send your written comments to the Town Clerk by email or letter.

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Neighborhood Watch News

Report Crimes & Suspicious Activity!

Mont. Co. Police non-emergency: 301-279-8000

Town Office: 301-926-2256

David Stopak: 301-330-6446

Betsy Klinger: 301-977-3517

Keith Gillis/Leigh Partington: 301-208-1437

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Recreation Committee News

Next meeting: Wednesday » 02.27.07 @ 7:30 p.m. in Council Room.

The public is invited to attend. New members always welcome!

12

Caroling in the Grove

This year Grove carolers were treated to a full moon accented by Mars and balmy skies. Thank you to Amy and John Porter for organizing and leading the carolers. John designed new Carol Books for the Grove, complete with gorgeous covers and LARGE font print!! Hot cider, popcorn and tasty holiday treats awaited us at the Hall. Thanks Porter family!

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The Washington Grove Holiday Revels

Many thanks to those involved in the holiday extravaganza, "A Town for All Seasons". It is volunteer efforts such as this that continue to keep our Town entertained and inspired.

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Film Society News: Circus Palestina.

On Sunday, January 6, 2008, the Film Society will be showing Circus Palestina, produced in Israel and directed by Eyal Halfon. A ragtag Eastern European circus comes to a West Bank village, but the locals' eagerness for diversion melts quickly when the lion escapes. An Israeli sergeant, a beautiful Russian lion tamer, and a small Arab boy band together to find Schweik before the tense settlement erupts. This charming, politically astute comedy won five Israeli film awards. It is subtitled, runs 83 minutes, and will air at 7 PM in McCathran Hall.

15

Woman's Club News

Next meeting: Thursday » 01.10.08 @ 7:30 p.m. at the home of Kathi Kershaw (103 Brown Street).

Please note the change of date, which is usually the third Thursday. The Woman's Club will hold its January meeting, a White Elephant Auction. Bring a gift or treasure which might fit better in someone else's life than in yours. Enjoy the warm company of neighbors and friends. Members will have an opportunity to pay dues for 2008 of \$15.00. The Woman's Club is also sponsoring a poetry workshop with Town resident Dave Keplinger. See the separate notice in this bulletin.

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WGUMC News

January 6th--Our annual Contemporary Issues series begins. Topics: Surprising Biblical takes on self-image, Jan. 6th, Friendship, Jan. 20th, Family, Jan. 27th, and Citizenship, Feb. 3rd; Sundays at 11:00 AM--both participants and those checking out a topic are welcome.

January 18th, 7:30 pm--The Environmental Ethics discussion will be on the 3rd Friday this month, when we'll take up the dangerous topic of Politics and the Environment. There's the upcoming "Global Warming Solutions Act," coming before the MD legislature after the holidays (it calls for a 20% reduction by 2020, and 80% reduction by 2050), and there's the question of how we factor in Environmental concerns in upcoming voting decisions! All are welcome to share questions and/or expertise. We return to the regular 2nd Friday schedule in February.

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Leaf Pickup Over

Leaf pickup by our contractor U.S. Lawns was completed on January 3, 2008. They will be back in early April for a spring clean-up. Watch future Town Bulletins for a more specific reminder.

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Christmas Tree Disposal

Beginning in late December, Christmas trees will be picked up by Town Maintenance staff. Please place your trees "curbside" but not in the road. Remember to remove all tinsel, ornaments, the stand, and any other metals. Thank you!

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Poetry Workshop Scheduled

"Writing Poetry" with David Keplinger; 10 am -12:30 pm, Saturday, February 9, 2008 David Keplinger, who lives on Ridge Road and teaches poetry at American University, has agreed to teach a 2 1/2 hour poetry writing

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workshop for residents on Saturday, February 9. David is the author of four books of poetry and winner of the 1999 T.S. Eliot Award.

The Woman's Club has kindly offered to sponsor the project and to make the clubhouse available for it. The group will be limited to twelve participants but in order to run the workshop we need at least nine. This is an opportunity for any who have enjoyed writing poetry over the years and also for the more timid who have never tried anything beyond "Roses are red..." Participants will free-write, discuss and revise at least two poems and will have a chance to hear comments from their peers and from the instructor. There will be a workshop fee of \$16 per person. We would like to know as soon as possible how many might be interested in enrolling. If you are interested or have questions please contact Betsy at BetsyKlinger@aol.com or leave a message at 301-977-3517

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Announcing: The GroveShare Wiki space

Why go buy something you'll only need now and then? Borrow your NEIGHBOR'S stuff! Share your own "stuff" with the neighbors! Have fun doing it! The GroveShare wiki space is designed to help Grove residents lend & borrow more and own less. GroveShare is a wiki, that is, it is a website built collaboratively by group members. This particular wiki is like the Town Yahoo group in that it can only be accessed by invited members and membership is limited to verified Town residents. The site contains lists of items members have available for neighbors to borrow. Categories include equipment for home maintenance, lawn & garden, baby care, recreation, pet-care, cookware and dinnerware and more. There is also a section for posting recommendations of local tradesmen and professionals. GroveShare currently has members representing 28 Grove households. To join, request an invitation in a message to BetsyKlinger@aol.com. Town residency will be verified.

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Streetlight Out?

The Town pays for our lights whether they are working or not. As soon as you notice that a streetlight is out, please get the 10-digit pole number and call it in to the Town Office, 301-926-2256 or e-mail, washgrove@comcast.net Thanks!

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Clerk's Corner
Happy New Year !!

23

Status of the LOS Field Condemnation Case

First some background review. The condemnation effort began after several alarming events led the Town to conclude that future use of the LOS field as passive parkland could not be adequately protected by MNCPPC. First, County Council members attempted to prevent Planning Board approval of terms protecting the LOS in the Preliminary Plan for development of the Casey property in December 2004. Subsequently, County Council hearings on revision of the Shady Grove Master Plan in early 2005 seriously considered altering the use of the LOS to that of a school site. We concluded that the Town needed legal standing to independently protect the LOS. Acquisition of ownership of the LOS property utilizing the Town's condemnation power presented the means to acquire such authority, an appraised valuation of

\$180,000 made this course of action practical, and a Special Town Meeting in the summer of 2005 approved pursuing this goal.

When Toll Brothers refused to discuss the Town's purchase offer, we initiated proceedings in County Circuit Court in the fall of 2005 to conclude the condemnation by determining the fair market value of the property. Because one of the conditions of the Preliminary Plan was conveyance of the LOS field to MNCPPC to be used as passive parkland, MNCPPC was allowed to participate in the suit as a third party defendant. Contrary to our expectation that our common interest in protecting the LOS would facilitate cooperation with MNCPPC, an extended period of discussion ensued during which we sought to reconcile MNCPPC's insistence of having sole legal interest in the property with the Town's determination to acquire the legal right to protect the passive parkland use into the future. When compromise failed, the court case resumed. In February, the Court heard arguments on motions for Summary Judgment filed by the parties. In April Toll Brothers conditionally conveyed the LOS field to MNCPPC subject to approval of their Phase I Site Plan. In July 2007, Judge Bernard ruled in favor of the Town's motion for partial summary judgment that Washington Grove did have the right to condemn the property, and ruled against alternative motions of the Toll Brothers and MNCPPC. Subsequent arguments to reconsider these rulings were rejected by the Court in October 2007. The standing of MNCPPC as defendant has been denied.

The LOS condemnation case has reached a critical juncture, with the Town in a very strong position. The Town has requested the Judge to move the case forward and to schedule a trial date. MNCPPC has the option of pursuing an appeal of the rulings, which would take the case to a state Appeals Court, where a ruling in favor or against MNCPPC could ultimately set precedent on the extent of their authority versus that of a municipality. While an appeal could delay resolution of the condemnation case for 18-24 months, costs to argue the Town's case would be low. If the condemnation trial proceeds, legal costs will likely be modest. We have also been advised that prospects of the LOS field being valued above \$180,000 have significantly diminished, and the value may be even lower, due to Toll Brothers conditional conveyance of the LOS to MNCPPC in April, which demonstrated they accepted the passive parkland land use of the LOS. This has been further supported by Toll Brothers pursuit of the Phase I Site Plan to ultimate approval in September 2007, which requires the conveyance of the LOS as passive parkland prior to the recordation of new lots.