

**TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS**  
**FY 2009-2010**

**ROADS, WALKWAYS, CONTRACTS**

**Charlie Challstrom**

Streetlights/Energy Grant – Town residents are asked to evaluate the new induction streetlight on Chestnut Road directly across from the Town Office. We would save almost half of our \$20,000 annual streetlight energy and maintenance costs by converting to these 85-watt induction lights. Light emitting diode (LED) street lights are also being developed, but not yet ready for our use. If the Town accepts induction streetlights, Pepco can convert our existing incandescent streetlights to induction bulbs. A \$5,000 energy grant from the Maryland Energy Administration would cover our conversion costs. Please provide feedback as the Town Council will consider making a decision on induction streetlights at the May 10<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

Block Boundary Surveys – Block boundary surveys improve our knowledge of public rights of way for tree maintenance and ownership. To resolve Block 9 boundary problems (bounded by Center Street, Grove Road, The Circle, and First Avenue), an exchange of deeds is proposed so that Seventh Avenue would return to the intended 10-foot width, and the Nagrod porch and fences would no longer encroach onto public property. Snider & Associates has placed wooden stakes at the locations for new survey monuments to enable us to observe and understand this proposal before we introduce a Town ordinance to authorize the deeds.

Yard Waste Pickups – Please use the weekly Yard Waste collection by our trash/recycling contractor. Leaves, grass clippings, sticks, and brush can be stuffed into brown paper bags or into a container with a “Yard Waste” sticker available from the Town Office. Multiple containers are OK.

Gravel Priorities – While road resurfacing was not done due to cuts in State highway user revenue, we are moving ahead with some graveling. The Council discussed gravel priorities, and gravel was delivered to the lake parking area and then spread by John Lottes. (Thank you John!) The next priority areas are the parking areas near McCathran Hall, along Acorn Lane, and Locust Lane. We have also begun to put gravel along some pavement edges to improve drainage, eliminate drop-offs, and extend the life of the asphalt paving.

**MAINTENANCE**

**Joe Clark**

The maintenance report for each month is posted on the Town's website. It represents tasks completed during that month and includes highlights of outstanding issues. The major maintenance issue for the last year was the cleaning up from the record snowfall this past winter. Major damage was done to trees and shrubs for both the Town and residential properties.

The Mayor has appointed a committee of Town residents to begin the process for performing the maintenance functions for the Town. This committee is composed of Sylvie Favret, Bud O’Conner, Sandy Klingenberg, John Tomlin and is chaired by Councilor Joe Clark. The report and recommendations will be given to the Council and Mayor on May 10, 2010. A brief update on the Committee's draft report will be included in the Town Meeting. It is anticipated that the new Maintenance schema will be in place by July 1, 2010.

## **SAFETY**

### **Joe Clark**

Speeding continues to be an aggravation of the safety of our Town roads. There were two rather serious incidents this year where cars were racing on Chestnut Road. This was reported to the police and since that time, it has been quiet.

Another point of concern was the number of cars parked in Woodward Park after dusk. These should be reported directly to the police. Two points about this activity: first, those who reported the suspect cars were very wise in not confronting the automobile owners. Second, having a description of the car and, if possible the license plate, will be helpful in police follow up.

In September, the Montgomery County Police department instituted a new system for reporting property crimes. This includes the following:

- Theft (under \$10,000.00)
- Theft from Autos
- Identify theft
- Vandalism, Vandalism to Vehicle
- Tips
- Lost property

Once the appropriate information is submitted the user will receive a copy of the report and a case number. This should be an improvement because with it, police are then freed up for other work.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

### **Joe Clark**

During this last year, the Council has made a serious effort to reach out to the neighboring communities which surround Washington Grove. Several meetings were held both within the Grove and outside. A beginning partnership has begun with people from Saybrook, Emory Grove, the Montgomery County Office of the Executive and several people from Washington Grove. Paula Puglisi, Pastor Judy Young, Ann Phillips, Kathie Evans and I have all been involved.

There are common community issues which have an impact on us all: - crime, gang violence, poverty and the lack of information of what help is available. We have also discussed how neighbors can help neighbors and two community programs are specifically targeted for neighbors to help those most in need.

After several meetings it was decided that the existing Neighbor Corps is the most capable organization we can support so that neighborhood issues can be addressed. Neighbor Corps is located in the Family Services complex of Girard Street and East Diamond. The initial training has now been completed and it is expected that the program will resume later this spring.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **Georgette Cole**

John McClelland stepped down as Chairman of the Planning Commission in December 2009 after twelve years "and 138 building permit approvals". His depth of experience is sadly missed. Bob Evans was elected the new Chairman. Steve Werts is the Commission's liaison with the Town's code enforcement officer; Eric Gleason reviews building permits; Samantha Beres and Missy Yachup (alternate member) review fence installations. As the fifth PC member, I function as the liaison to the Town Council.

Over the past few years we have had several problems with building projects in the town. Because of this the funds for a building code inspector have been in the budget since 2008. Our first use of the

code inspector started this year. The code inspector costs the town \$40 per hour and we will be using about 2.5 hours of his time on a "major" building permit. Because of this the PC recommended the introduction of ordinance 2010-04 which increases the building permit fee from \$40 to \$100 for any permit requiring the use of the code inspector. The public hearing was on April 26 and the new fee goes into effect May 26. In order to reduce the on-going problems with property line and set-back encroachments, the Planning Commission now requires a boundary survey for most permits. Details are available in the building permit application package available in the Town Office. A permit application needs to be submitted at least seven days before the PC meeting at which it will be considered so that there is adequate time for review before it comes to the Planning Commission as a whole.

In response to resident feedback, the Planning Commission is working to improve access to current and past building permit/projects. Eric Gleason and Kathy Lehman are heading up this effort and aim to make online updates available soon.

## **FORESTRY**

### **Georgette Cole**

Reforestation in the Town parks - Four new trees were installed by Stadler Nursery under the supervision of the Forestry Committee in October 2009. The watering program continues to go well with new trees getting two gators (20 gallons each) and trees in over a year, one gator. Residents who have a suggestion for a new tree should contact me at [georgettecole@yahoo.com](mailto:georgettecole@yahoo.com) or 301-330-6740.

Reforestation in 2009-10 also included our Town woods - Forest succession in both the East and West woods has been drastically impacted by deer browsing. In the fall of 2009 we established three fenced areas in the East Woods where deer are excluded (along the old Cherry Avenue trail). Thirteen young trees from the Maryland Tree-mendous program were placed in these enclosure on a volunteer day October 31<sup>st</sup>. Acorns harvested by residents in the fall were also planted by Charlie Challstrom and other volunteers in the first enclosure that day. In April of 2010 another group of volunteers planted twenty-five white oak and twenty-five pin oak seedlings from the John S. Ayton State Tree Nursery in tree tubes in the town parks and woods. Both of these approaches are experimental and will be evaluated over the next few years to determine if they should be repeated.

Gypsy Moth Spraying - Egg case counts were done by the State in December '09 and the levels are low. We were not included in the MD spray program for 2010. Between the spraying program and the weather not being favorable for gypsy moth propagation, we have been told the gypsy moth population will probably take several years to rebound.

Tree removals - 10 trees were removed, 4 trees pruned to eliminate hazard limbs and 16 stumps ground in 2009-10 for a total of \$16,205. In the coming year the stump areas will be smoothed out and seeded with grass so that the areas are easier to mow thus improving the overall appearance of the parks. Two large oaks deemed to be in questionable health are slated to be evaluated by a professional arborist. I expect this will result in some additional tree work for the current fiscal year. I have once again requested \$25,000 for fiscal 2010-11.

The Forestry Committee - This Committee is currently co-chaired by Carol Uhlendorf and Audrey Maskery. The Committee has sponsored the new tree planting days with excellent resident participation. Arbor Day 2010 was a joint effort with the Woods Group and offered volunteer opportunities both in the woods and at McCathran Hall. The Committee continues to monitor the health of our park trees.

Trash cleanup in the West Woods and along Washington Grove Lane and Railroad Street continues with a stalwart group of residents rescuing these town borders. Please contact Audrey Maskery or Elly Briggs if you'd like to assist in this effort.

The Woods Preservation Project 2009-10 - This effort, chaired by Ann Briggs, continues their 5-year plan. The improved appearance of the East Woods along Grove Road headed toward McCauley and of the West Woods along Washington Grove Lane is very clear. Follow-up invasives clearing is scheduled for June. The identity fence project on Washington Grove Lane will be increased if a grant we've applied for from Montgomery County is funded.

## **McCATHRAN HALL**

### **Sylvie Favret**

The Hall Committee continues to review physical needs of McCathran Hall. Each year begins with an evaluation of the entire building. Continuing activities have been:

- in conjunction with Maintenance, have helped monitor the fire suppressant system in the Hall and related noise issues from the compressor
- provided oversight on effectiveness of regular weekly cleaning work, hired to maintain Hall surfaces between biannual deep cleanings.
- investigated possible ways to counteract drainage issues. Under consideration are additional guttering and downspouts as well as type of gutters most effective for long term maintenance and of compatible design with our historic building.

Completed projects include:

- the new wood trash containers for the upper Hall, designed and built by Jerry Ruley.
- Following a suggestion from the Hall Committee, members of Summer in the Parks organizers completed a major cleaning and organization of their storage space and the deep storage area.

On tap is possible and much needed insulation of at least the floor of the main Hall. This has been spearheaded by Charlie Challstrom to take advantage of stimulus money.

We're very grateful to The Forestry & Beautification Committee for their external improvements of plantings and maintenance.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

### **Sylvie Favret**

This is a group of very committed residents who work tirelessly to preserve the historical nature of our Town and provide very valuable information to any Town resident who has a construction or renovation project.

The commission reviewed several projects:

- 2 new major additions
- several minor additions and outbuildings

But mainly the HPC started working with the Planning Commission to address the aspects of mansionization. A combined group met approx. once a month to identify the various aspects of mansionization, and its impact on a historic town like ours. Measures to minimize the threat were discussed. I want to emphasize how fortunate we are to have such a group as the HPC in town. We as residents can go with our ideas and drawings of home improvements and ask for advice, information

on the history of our houses, and ways to improve and better integrate into the Town any new additions or new construction. Sometimes with a minor change to the design of a window or a front door, the whole project just fits in better. Recently I spoke with a neighbor who was delighted when an HPC member casually looked at her house and mentioned a change that had probably been made to it-- something that could easily be put back to its historic condition, which the neighbor now plans to include when the home is renovated. We all enjoy the results as we walk in Washington Grove, where each home is unique.

## **MAPLE LAKE**

### **Marida Hines**

As development and highways encroach on all our borders, Maple Lake is a rare natural space where Town residents can gather to socialize and enjoy a break from the summer heat. The Lake remains a pleasant resource for Town residents largely due to the work and dedication of a few individuals.

Lake Committee members include John Hutchinson (Lake Czar), Tom Land (Swimming Instruction/Summer in the Parks Liaison), Marida Hines & Eric Selby (Lifeguards), Ann Phillips, Sally Mansfield, and Karen Himmelberger (Goose Patrol), Bruce Rothrock, John Lottes, & Jim Fletcher (Facilities & Grounds), and Judy Mroczka and Sharon Hurst, assisted by Town Clerk Kathryn Lehman and outside expert John Mudre.

The 2009 summer season at the Lake went well. We had a full complement of experienced guards who coped well with a variety of challenges. We were very lucky in that the security problems of the previous year were largely absent, possibly due to increased assistance from the police following our instigation of a relatively 'zero tolerance' policy where we instructed the guards to call the police for every significant incident. One of the prime perpetrators of the break-ins and threats of the previous season did not reappear, probably due to police action. The overall look of the Lake grounds improved, as lifeguards were required to pick up all toys and trash at the end of each day and to rake the beach clean and even.

Maple Lake and its facilities are in good working order. We continue to have difficulties maintaining a secure enclosure due to natural wear and tear on the fence, erosion, and sporadic vandalism, but there was a renewed commitment to repairing breaches quickly. Over the next few years we will be reinforcing the fence with thorny bushes, but there are no plans to replace the fence. We did investigate putting in a truly secure fence but the cost is prohibitive.

A variety of ongoing maintenance also took place, including keeping the phone, shed lights, and surveillance camera batteries in working order, replacing barley bales, and treating the lake for algae and pond weed. In December the compressor, which is old, began giving trouble and a variety of costly solutions were proposed; however, Jim Fletcher managed to repair it.

In April, the annual cleanup was held. The Lake Committee and the Woods and Forestry Committees worked together to schedule their volunteer days to avoid any conflict, and partly as a result, Maple Lake Cleanup Day was well attended and a great deal was accomplished. The lake was partially drained, leaves and other detritus were raked from the bottom of the shallows, verges were clipped, barley bails to be pulled for refreshing, trash removed, and a tree that fell down inside the fence near the spring was cut up and removed. We did not add any new sand this year, but did re-gravel the parking area. John Mudre did his initial observation of the algae and pond-weed.

For the first time in many years, we did not have any nesting geese on the Island. It is unclear why not. Groups of geese have spent time there and Karen Himmelberger spent considerable time and effort picking up droppings.

The summer 2010 Maple Lake season is shaping up well. We have a full complement of lifeguards scheduled including several from last year, along with Jack Leng and Peter Suzich. Casey Stalker will be our swimming instructor this year, as well as being a lifeguard when not teaching. Casey comes highly recommended and has experience with different age groups as well as individual instruction.

## **RECREATION COMMITTEE**

### **Marida Hines**

The Recreation Committee plays a vital role in the Washington Grove, making possible through hard work and judicious sponsorship the extraordinary range and number of activities that make our Town a vibrant community and a truly special place to live.

The Recreation Committee members include Ann Briggs, Emily Cavey, Mary Challstrom, Mary Kay Dubois, Brenda Gumula, Leila Keese, Charlene McClelland, Amy Porter, Kitty Vogan, and Wendy Weisbard.

The 2009 season had a full program of events. Notable among them were the Washington Grove Holiday Extravaganza entitled "The Grover Express, The Train that Dreams are Made Of," an original play with music and dance featured Town talent along with some friends of Washington Grove. The event was videotaped and the tape is available. The new additions of a New Year's Party and the Blues-ToberFest were very popular, as was a Ceili Dance. The Recreation Committee also sponsored the newly formed Drawing Group and is now sponsoring the Poetry Workshops.

2010's events have already begun with a Children's Program in April. In May, the Washington Grove Drawing Group held their Art Show and Reception. The Committee has the post-Town Meeting Party planning well under way. Music Weekend is planned and will include Friday night's Big Band with pizza and beer, a Children's Recital Saturday and Bobby Lewis Band Saturday evening, and the traditional Baroque Breakfast on Sunday morning. There will be a baseball game and potluck in the afternoon on July 4th.

Due to budget constraints, the Recreation Committee will be paying somewhat less for musicians at Music Weekend and for purchasing prizes for the 4th of July competition. The Town's subsidy toward the cost of enrolling children in the Summer In The Parks program is also being scaled back somewhat.

## **MEMORIALS**

### **Marida Hines**

No memorials were proposed or developed this year.

## **TOWN WEBSITE**

### **Ted Kelly-Ventresca**

The past year saw fulfillment of citizens' requests for faster posting of more council and town related information in addition to easier access to current and upcoming information. We are lucky to have Bill Saar in place as our neighbor and webmaster as well as Kathy Lehman who provides the webmaster timely delivery of Town related meeting minutes and pertinent Town information including the electronic version of the Town Bulletin. Working with Bill on the Town website continues to be a

creative and very professional process. I'm proud to say that the well coordinated working relationship between Bill, Kathy and me has resulted in new and much used Town website features including: The "*Town Testimony*" link which provides the Mayor's and Town Council official statements allowing all citizens to review the official statements made on behalf of our Town and the *Interactive calendar "tab"* which provides the ability for daily weekly to monthly and list review of Town happenings. Also, in response to fellow council member recommendations we will now be archiving Council and Commission/Committee agendas and reports in pdf format.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL**

### **Ted Kelly-Ventresca**

My first year of interaction with the Maryland Municipal League and neighboring town government has been a much easier and productive relationship based upon the generous mentoring that Charlie Challstrom has kindly provided. It was an honor representing our Town at the Memorial Day wreath laying ceremony in Gaithersburg and recently volunteering for the County Cable Committee. Resident Chris Brown and I attended the Rockville State Capital Day where we had the opportunity to detail the negative impact Casey 6 & 7/Roberts Oxygen purchase would have on our Town and the overall Smart Growth Mission to Governor O'Malley.

Recently, while attending the County Executive meeting with Maryland Municipal League we learned of the 311 system that will be implemented by Montgomery County to provide a place for customers to call when they need a service but don't know who to contact. This "call center" concept routes a query directly to the correct individual and department. There is the opportunity for local town governments to participate and I have provided the initial information to the Town Council.

## **PLAYGROUND**

### **Ted Kelly-Ventresca**

2009 saw the initial review of playground apparatus, fencing, insurance recommendations, drainage and wood chip issues. The subsequent recommendations I made to the Town Council included valuable input from Jim Fletcher. The recommendations have resulted in the following repair, safety and beautification projects. In October we had a half load (approx 70 cubic Yards) of wood chips delivered to the playground. I reached out to the community to come together with shovels and wheelbarrows in hand to spread a predefined depth of wood chips under each playground apparatus. It was a great day of volunteerism and community support. A neighbor also arrived with his personal bobcat like backhoe to literally move the process along. Children who helped received Washington National kids caps and cookies too! The last time woodchips were placed under playground apparatus was five years ago so the replacement of the chips provided additional safety, drainage and beautification. Before July we are planning the repair of the tennis court fence that was destroyed by a falling tree and I have identified and will be recommending new recycled plastic plank picnic table and park benches that are budgeted to be in place by Fourth of July.

2010/2011 projects I intend to see advocated and accomplished include the re-pointing and restoration of the park stone grille/fireplace along with restoration and weed clearing of baseball backstops.