

## TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS—February 2009

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION—Joe Clark**

The HPC discussed Proposed Modification of the Town Zoning Ordinance 2008-07 and suggested there were problems with the accuracy of the existing square footage recorded for some of the homes and there was confusion about which basis was being used for lot coverage: foot print or square footage of the home. There needs to be further refinement of the data before some confidence can be gained in supporting the ordinance.

In addition, the problems between the HPC review and the Planning Commission were discussed the it was suggested that the chairpersons of both commissions meet to see if a different timing could be established so that both the home owner and the town review process could be less problematic.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT—Joe Clark**

There was a Town meeting held on February 13 at the Town Hall with Officer Dianne Tillery of the Montgomery County Police Department and Stephen Chaikin of the Montgomery County State's Attorney's office. There were approximately 35 people in attendance. Officer Tillery stressed the importance of people realizing that this community is in an urban environment and if they leave their homes and automobiles unlocked, it is an invitation for a crime to occur. Also, people need to be sure nothing of value is left on the car's seats: computer, cell phone, GPS device, iPod, purses...anything. The more people are negligent in making their cars and homes safe, the more it encourages crime.

Officer Tillary also stressed the importance of reporting all crimes whether anything was taken or not. It is the only way the police department can track where there are problems. Most people do not report the crime and that causes difficulty in deployment of officers and prevention. Finally, she offered to help train the Neighborhood Watch volunteers. Keith Gillis was present and presented his statistics about the activities of Washington Grove.

### **MEMORIALS—Joe Clark**

Nothing to report for February 2009.

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

**The Forestry Committee** met on February 2. The following topics were covered:

- 1) Arbor Day celebration coordinated with the Woods Group on April 25 themed on "Trees, Trails and Treats".
- 2) The area across from the flagpole in Woodward Park. Forestry recommends that the central graveled area be tidied up and the barrels be replaced with a park bench facing the flagpole for use during July 4 festivities. The junipers should be replaced with dirt and grass seed to become part of the grassed area in Woodward Park.
- 3) The use of gators in 2009. Twenty-four new gators have been purchased for the 12 new trees that were installed in fall 2008. Stadler and the MD DNR recommend that new trees be watered for two years (sometimes longer depending on the tree). The Forestry committee recommends

that the eleven trees that were installed in fall 2007 also be gatored. Jim is inventorying the number of available gators.

4) Survey of Town Forestry projects. The committee discussed areas the Committee tries to cover and the projects currently underway. Carol Uhlendorf, Audrey Maskery and Georgette Cole will collaborate on a summary to let Council and Town know what the Forestry Committee is working on.

5) Walkway graveling. This has not been done since 2000 and is urgently needed in some areas. The Forestry Committee will assist maintenance by listing walkways that need renewed gravel. Jim and Georgette will utilize this to come up with a prioritized list for 2009 and 2010.

### **Gypsy Moth:**

I received the gypsy moth egg case counts for Washington Grove on January 29. I will bring a chart of the egg case counts for 2006-08 to the Council meeting (I can email the document to anyone who wishes to see it before then). The result of the double spraying we had last year is quite good. I discussed the counts with Tom Lupp (the MDA entomologist in Frederick) and he tells me that we will not qualify for spraying this year. The number of spray blocks is down from 25 last year to 5 this year. I gather from our conversation that aerial spraying in the Grove would not be cost-effective this year. The preferred alternative is to do “spot spraying” if needed. I have contacted Bartlett Tree Experts to get an idea of what per tree spraying might cost. They use Conserve SC (spinosyn A and D) which is a ‘natural’ pesticide derived from a soil-dwelling bacterium. When I have more information on cost, I will also provide more information on the pesticide which is widely popular in Integrated Pest Management programs due to its high specificity and low toxicity.

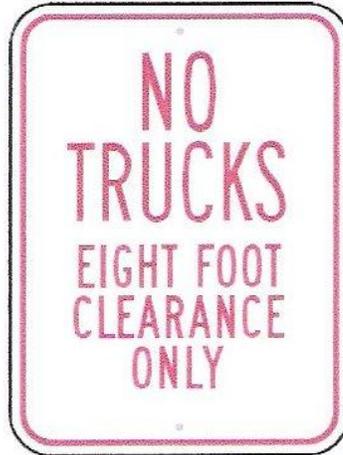
**Woods Group:** The Invasive Species Subgroup met on Feb. 12 with representatives from Montgomery Weed Control, MDA Weed Control and MNCPPC. The latter is Carole Bergman who is their expert on invasive species control. How to prioritize the work was discussed as well as timing recommendations. From my perspective, the most interesting point raised by Carole was “what do you plan to do in the area you are getting rid of large swaths of invasives (like greenbriar)?” Unlike the work that has been done so far where vines have been cut and ‘painted’ to prevent re-growth, if spraying is done over a broad area, a plan for re-planting is critical to success. Apparently you cannot just let nature take its course. Re-evaluation of the invasives eradication plan is probable.

### **ROADS AND WALKWAYS—Georgette Cole**

**Cost for signs on Johnson Alley:** We can add a 12”X18” sign (see #1 below) to the existing “No Truck” signs at \$32.10/sign plus shipping. The existing signs are 18”X24” at the McCauley Street end and 24”X30” at the Acorn Lane end. If we wish to consolidate, a sign of 18”X24” to replace the existing signs (see #2 below) would be \$45.50/sign plus shipping. I believe the former would be easily visible.



1.



2.

**Protective Bollards for Propane Tanks:** The safety of two propane tanks legally installed on private property has been raised. One is located at #2 The Circle on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. This walkway is currently being used for regular deliveries for the resident at #6 The Circle. The residents of both households have agreed that bollards placed on the Avenue would enhance public safety. The second tank is located at #12 The Circle where it sits alongside Acorn Lane. The resident does not believe it constitutes a hazard to public safety. I suggest that all Council members drive by the location (Acorn Lane near Johnson Alley) and form their own assessment of the potential hazard. I believe the Council as a whole should discuss if and where bollards should be placed. Highway and Safety, Inc has given us drawings and bids for 3-inch removable bollard (\$431 each) or 4-inch non-movable bollards (\$459 each). Two bollards would be needed on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, three on Acorn Lane. I will bring copies of the bids and the H&S schematics to the Council session.

**Graveling Walkways:** It has been nine years since walkway graveling was done. It is currently needed on The Circle and radiating walkways, also on Oak Street between Maple Avenue and Chestnut Road. The Forestry committee is making a list of the areas of greatest need. Jim and I will assemble a prioritized list and get bids.

**LAKE COMMITTEE—Marida Hines**

The Lake Committee meet in February. Members include Marida Hines (Council Liaison), Ann Phillips, Karen Himmelberger, and visitors Linda Winter and Carolyn Rapkievian. John Hutchinson, who usually leads the Lake team, was not there.

**Geese --** they are back and we have been unsuccessful in chasing all of them away despite the valiant efforts of Karen, her trusty assistant, Jet, and his friend Nick Mroczka. Ann Phillips, who has training in humane geese control, advised we stop harassing them now and let one pair nest. They will chase the others away, and we will oil their eggs so there will be no goslings. Ann is writing some text to put in the Town Bulletin requesting Grovers to not harass the nesting pair or take their eggs; doing so just encourages them to lay more.

**Security** -- It was noted that the police claim they have cleaned up much of the gang activity etc that was troubling our immediate area, and also noted that Town Treasurer Mary Challstrom warns that the Town's budget will be stretched extremely thin this coming fiscal year. Nonetheless, Committee members agreed that the security situation at the lake is serious enough to warrant some sort of patrol to assure adult monitoring, for the safety of lifeguards and patrons. No one felt the security company we used last year was worth the money and there was considerable doubt that any such company would be worth the cost. A better solution might be to hire a retired person needing some additional income, at a more reasonable rate. Karen knows a good potential candidate and is talking to him. There are also possibilities that a Grover might be glad of the income so Eric is putting a notice in the Town Bulletin to see if there is any response.

**Clean up day** - date April 11 with a rain date of the 12th.

**Upkeep** - Bruce and Jim need to reset the 'cameras' in the parking area which have been 'adjusted' by vandals. There is also a gap in the fence where a tree fell, on the Newport side, that Jim will have to repair.

**Budget** - We discussed some preliminary figures so we can start getting the Lake budget requirement to Mary Challstrom in time for the Council's budget discussions in March. Most of the Lake budget items from last year will remain stable or go up slightly (2.5% to 5%). Everyone agreed we really need new sand this year, and there is some money still in the 2009 budget for this. However, security costs from last year were not anticipated and the money may have to come from somewhere else, if we can't get funding any other way. We don't know who will be teaching swimming this year and will get in touch with Tom Land to find out. That might help firm up the salary uncertainty.

**Critical dates** - The next committee meeting has been tentatively set for March 26, after Hutch returns. The lake opens May 23 for weekends only and full time on June 16, 2009( the last day of school).

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

The Recreation Committee did not meet in February 2009.

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION – Charlie Challstrom**

Building Permits – 344 Ridge Road. The Town's building permit for this new home was issued in 2004. The County's building permit was renewed in 2008 and expires again April 10, 2009. The Planning Commission heard reports that little or no progress has been made on this concrete block home in the last year, and there is concern the site may be a safety hazard. The Commission will consider whether to require Town approval for County permit renewals.

Ordinance No. 2008-07 Modifying Building Coverage Standards – The Commission continued discussion of this proposed ordinance. Members acknowledged that the initial motivation for this ordinance was to equalize renovation opportunities for owners of small lots in the RR-1 zone (e.g. 7,500 sq.ft. lots), and the ordinance as introduced October 27, 2008, is preferred over the amendment suggested later.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL – Charlie Challstrom**

Brown Street Extended Outlot – Ownership of “Outlot A” containing the stormwater sand filter has not yet transferred to the Town. Carrie Accardi, Brown Street Station LLC, contacted the Town because of a tax lien notice for this property. A message was sent to the Supervisor of Assessments and I’ve spoken with Eric Engelberg to get help in resolving this situation.

Master Plan Legislation Reviewed – House Bill 1116 as introduced in the Maryland General Assembly will require future master plans to reflect smart growth performance measures. This legislation specifies percentage targets for: locally generated vehicle miles traveled per capita, affordability of new housing units, and jobs created within priority funding areas. Jurisdictions that issue less than 50 building permits in a calendar year could be exempt. Since most building permits in already developed small towns do not involve new housing units, I recommended to Delegate Barkley and Delegate Ali and other bill sponsors that their proposed exemption should be based on the number of building permits issued for new housing units.

Assistance re Master Plan – A representative of the Town of Brookeville contacted us regarding experiences with updating our Master Plan. A grant proposal to fund a master plan consultant for Brookeville was turned down by the State, and they are facing the October 2009 deadline. A particular concern was creation of their water resources element, so I described our process that included capacity verifications by WSSC and provided a Word version of our plan on CD that may enable Brookeville to meet all of the requirements.

**CONTRACTS—Kathie Evans**

No report

**WEB SITE—Kathie Evans**

No report.

**MCCATHRAN HALL—Kathie Evans**

No report.

**MAINTENANCE—John Compton**

Jim has reported on Maintenance at the previous meeting.

**PARKS AND RECREATION—John Compton**

No report.