

TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS—November 2009

CONTRACTS—Charlie Challstrom

Trash/Recycling Contracts: Trash and recycling pickup will be on Friday, November 27, because Thursday is a holiday. This will be the last day this year for collection of yard trimmings placed curbside -- yard trimming collection will start again March 1st. A total of 25 homes participated by placing items out for the Special Collection on November 7.

Leaf Collection and Disposal Contract: Collection of leaves began this month. A periodic inventory is made of leaf piles in Town, and Kathy Lehman monitors the number of loads collected by the contractor, U.S. Lawns. The contractor collected essentially all leaf piles put out and received 25% payment as of November 15. The next contract performance target is December 1st.

ROADS AND WALKWAYS—Charlie Challstrom

Right-Of-Way Block Boundary Surveys: I met with Joe Snider to confirm survey measurement results for Block 16 bounded by Grove Road, Seventh Avenue, The Circle, Sixth Avenue, and Dorsey Street. Monument installation and plat preparation remain to be done. With completion of these survey measurements, we can now adjust monuments and the plat for the northern end of neighboring Block 9 (including Peter Nagrod's property) to ensure the prescribed right-of-way for the Seventh Avenue walkway. Once we have final plats for Blocks 9 and 16, block boundary surveys will be complete around The Circle. We previously stated our intent to then conduct the plat approval process (Planning Commission public hearing, then Town Council resolution) as specified in Article 66B, Annotated Code of Maryland, for all the completed plats.

FORESTRY & BEAUTIFICATION—Georgette Cole

Tree Removals: Three dead/severely compromised (as assessed by Dan Landry) old oaks were removed in November by C&L Tree service for a total of \$6,500. Our total for the fiscal year now stands at \$12,725.

Deer Damage: I have identified five town trees so far which have been girdled by deer rutting. I have also been fielding reports from residents of damaged trees on private property. Sadly, this is a result of the increasing overpopulation in our area, which we have little chance of altering. The forestry committee continues to try to protect our trees, now using the new solid tree tubes.

European Hornets: A new tree threat is a resident population of European Hornets which strip bark from trees to build their nests. They completely girdled a sourwood sapling in the Ridge forest conservation area necessitating its removal. I have seen considerable damage to two resident trees (Gumula and Dubnick). We have consulted the Maryland Ag Extension and been told that if the bees are observed on a tree it can be treated with Sevin to keep them away from it. Stadler Nursery has advised us that we need to find the current nest and get a professional to remove it while the bees are dormant. If we do not do so this winter our problem will escalate in the spring. Based on the bees observed by Brenda Gumula, the nest is probably in the wooded area around the Maintenance shed. Once most of the leaves are down we will have a better chance of finding the nest.

Woods Committee: Met on November 17.

The invasives work to date has been dramatically successful. If the \$4,298 in the invasive species removal budget is available we HIGHLY recommend that it be used to consolidate the current work in the West Woods this spring. I am very happy to say that our invasive species removal program has been noted by Montgomery County officials in the "Weed Warriors" program as a model for other areas trying to do this type of work.

The joint work day with Forestry Committee for planting trees in the deer enclosures and working on the Cherry Avenue trail was also very successful. We are now working on plans for joint projects (two work days) in the early spring to plant tree seedlings in our existing supply of tree tubes and to address another large section of East Woods trail.

Forestry and the Planning Commission: On November 12 I attended a presentation by DNR representative, Tod Ericson. The purpose was to educate officials (and developers) in Montgomery County and MC municipalities about a change in the Maryland Roadside Tree Law (RTL). In actual fact, the RTL is much the same as when it was passed in 1914. Under it a tree growing in a public road right-of-way (ROW) cannot be trimmed, cared for or removed until a Tree Care Permit is obtained from the Maryland DNR Forest Service. A municipality (like ours) is supposed to have a blanket permit to perform our normal tree maintenance. I will bring a copy of this permit application to the Council meeting. The change we are dealing with is the fact that the State has not been enforcing this measure strictly to date but intends to do so now. An important aspect of this is establishing the roadside ROWs. I have asked Charlie Challstrom to look at this issue. He says the block surveys we've been doing will help. An area that has a "forest conservation plan" is governed by that plan and not by the RTL. The current change in the Roadside Tree Law has been the addition of clause D which states "a county or municipality may not issue a building permit to an applicant for any clearing, construction, or development that will result in the trimming, cutting, removal or injury of a roadside tree until the applicant first obtains a permit from the Department in accordance with this section" [NRA 5-406(D)]. Apparently this is the result of legislative alarm over the current loss of roadside trees, especially in Montgomery County. We are not responsible for monitoring compliance, but the group was told that if we did not make it clear to applicants that this permit was required "our lawyers will be talking to your lawyers".

PLANNING COMMISSION--Georgette Cole

The Planning Commission met on November 4. The following permits and plans were discussed:

517 Washington Grove Lane--front portico and dormer plans presented. The portico had already been built (Mayor is being advised). The residents were told that the plans needed to be reviewed by HPC, required a permit from the PC, then a permit from Montgomery County as well.

317 Brown Street--Plans for addition submitted; new lot coverage will be 24.86%.

319 Brown Street--approved application for fence on 317 Brown side.

407 4th Ave--Fence permit based on 1995 house location survey denied due to uncertainty of corner marker location. NOTE: It would be advisable to require all permit applications to be accompanied by a Boundary survey. The town block surveys now make this both easier and less expensive.

215 Washington Grove Lane: approved permit for enclosure of small porch.
NOTE: There is an existing code violation at 215 WGL. The PC suggests that a provision could be added to Article IV that would withhold approval of any new permit on a property with an existing violation until it was corrected.

344 Ridge Road--PC reviewed this ongoing situation and prepared a list of enforcement options for the Mayor.

103 Brown Street--Completion date for the roof modification is Dec 15, 2009.

PC/HPC Work Sessions: The sixth work session established 3 subgroups to work on different sets of tools to address “mansionsization”. The next joint meeting is December 9.

MAINTENANCE—Joe Clark

See forwarded list from Jim Fletcher. I am working out a means to better track resident’s concerns about maintenance items. I have asked that the Town Clerk alert me/and Jim Fletcher when someone either phones in or drops off a concern. If I am out of town, it would certainly go to Jim. It would probably work best if she were to notify us both. In addition, I have asked those who are on the town listserv Yahoo site to email me their concerns. It has been entirely too cumbersome to remember what people say while I'm at the Post Office, walking in the neighborhood, or on my bicycle. I need it in writing so I can go over the list with Jim Fletcher on a weekly basis.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT—Joe Clark

Nothing to report.

COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE—Joe Clark

The next scheduled meeting of the Community Liaison Committee is December 7 at the Mercy Seat Church on Rt 124.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION—Sylvie Favret

No report.

McCATHRAN HALL—Sylvie Favret

Jim Fletcher has been working with Guardian to fix the compressor and leak problem in McCathran Hall. They have found a few leaks and are figuring out how we can fix the problem of the recurring compressor noise during Mousetrap or other Hall events. Charlie helped by crawling around in the attic with Jim. We got a formal estimate from Trunnell Electric on a potential fix, which will involve moving the compressor to another area of the Hall.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca

No Intergovernmental Updates other than a look toward the December 10th event. This should be an opportunity to gain other historic community insight on various issues at hand including, CSX and the moving of heavy industrial to a light industrial location within 50 feet of residents homes under the banner of "smart growth."

WEB SITE—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca

Nothing to report.

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca

As mentioned/discussed at the last Council meeting, I am planning a Playground discussion for mid-January with an invitation to families and individuals interested in discussing refurbishment or replacement of vintage playground items as recommended in the report forwarded by Kathy by the independent insurance representative. I will then ask for an opportunity to present those recommendations/suggestions to the Council for a consensus and then to the Town for a consensus on decisions and funding options. From that I will request that the funding and options be placed on next year’s budget.

MEMORIALS—Marida Hines

No report.

LAKE COMMITTEE—Marida Hines

No report.

RECREATION COMMITTEE—Marida Hines

No report.