

TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS—December 2009

CONTRACTS—Charlie Challstrom

Snow Removal Contract: For the season's first snowfall on December 5th, Lion Contractors, Inc., did a rapid and very complete plowing down to the pavement. Our new contract allows for more Town discretion with regard to sand/salt service, and sand was used at some intersections and on some slopes. I drove around almost every road segment in Town and verified that this was effective and sufficient. Consultation with others may be necessary to gain insight on the mix of salt and sand for specific temperature ranges for snowfalls later this season.

Leaf Collection and Disposal Contract: Collection of leaves continued by the contractor, U.S. Lawns. Kathy Lehman monitors the number of loads collected by the contractor, and I have identified remaining leaf piles before giving concurrence for the scheduled fall leaf collection payments. Ten percent of the contract price is held until completion of the final spring leaf collection.

ROADS AND WALKWAYS—Charlie Challstrom

Washington Grove Lane Traffic Speed and Safety: As per discussions at our November 9th Town Council meeting, I requested a reduction of the speed limit along Washington Grove Lane within the corporate limits of Washington Grove. The December 8th email response from Mark Terry, Montgomery County Department of Transportation, summarizes the County's speed studies, before and after installation of the speed humps, including the recent use of the speed trailer. Bottom line – these studies indicate that the posted 30 mph speed limit is appropriate, and the request for reduction was denied. Other safety issues will continue to be explored with the County, including installation of a sidewalk to replace the deteriorating asphalt path.

FORESTRY & BEAUTIFICATION—Georgette Cole

The Forestry Committee is on winter break. It will reconvene in February to prepare for the March volunteer day for sapling installation.

Tod Ericson, The DNR representative for our area, has contacted the Town office to set up an appointment for their biennial review. Kathy Lehman is coordinating the meeting which will take place in February.

PLANNING COMMISSION—Georgette Cole

The Planning Commission met on December 2.

John McClelland announced his resignation from the Planning Commission. John leaves after many years of outstanding service to Washington Grove. He will be most profoundly missed.

The PC discussed the tracking and follow-up of ordinance violations. More use needs to be made of our code inspector. John has agreed to call Mr. Plummer to get appointments arranged for all of the outstanding permits that need inspection (103 Brown, 344 Ridge, 517 Washington Grove Lane, 108 Maple, 317 Brown and 415 Grove Ave).

517 Washington Grove Lane---permit review by HPC was presented. The owner submitted a boundary survey and measurement on the front setback. The permit application was approved

and will go to Montgomery County. PC recommends a fine for Mr. Gomp for having started the building process without a permit.

108 Maple---building permit not yet complete. Have progress checked by the code inspector.

118 Grove Avenue---House location survey submitted for fence permit: application was approved.

344 Ridge Road---Terry Arnold and the Hunter-Ceci's attended the meeting. Terry cannot afford to move the house; the Hunter-Ceci's do not wish to sell any of their property to him. The third alternative is a fine and "amelioration". Terry is very willing to do whatever needs to be done to install plantings to screen his home from his neighbors view. They will work together to come up with a plan that can be embodied in a covenant to run with the property. Terry understands that there will also be a fine as determined by the Mayor. The Hunter-Ceci's were very disturbed by the lack of information available to them during the very long process of Mr. Arnold's house building project.

103 Brown Street---Roof modification has been done. It needs to be inspected by Larry Plummer for compliance.

415 Grove Avenue---A letter explaining the non-conformity of the property needs to be prepared. Specifically the property must be made conforming by 1) either removing the two story garage or reducing it to 20 feet in height or by 2) connecting it to the primary dwelling as approved by the original building permit. The PC agreed that the property must be made conforming within 90 days of either 1) the date of sale of the property or 2) one year if the property has not been sold.

PC/HPC Work Sessions: Met on December 9. Sub-group work still in progress. The next meeting is January 27.

The 344 Ridge Road process has highlighted the need for increased resident access to building permits coming up for approval and to the status of building-permits-in-progress. The Planning Commission will be considering ways to deal with this issue. In the meantime it would be helpful for the Town Web site to show current information on what is happening at both the TC and PC meetings. Currently the agenda for our meetings are posted prior to the meeting but then disappear the day after the meeting. Thus there is no information available to a resident on what has happened at a meeting until the minutes are posted after being approved a month later. Keeping the agenda of a meeting on the web site would provide a minimal level of information until the meeting minutes are approved and posted. Ted Kelly (Town Web Site) and I discussed this and he thinks it's reasonable and doable. Ted will talk to Bill Saar about implementation. He will also check on the process for posting minutes which are not up to date at the moment.

MAINTENANCE—Joe Clark

See forwarded list from Jim Fletcher.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT—Joe Clark

Three incidents of speeding cars—probably racing each other—along Chestnut Road and on Ridge Road. These have occurred in the last month. There should be a way for people to report the timing, location and some kind of description of the vehicles. I would suggest that all specific information should be reported to the police – or to either Keith Gillis or me.

COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE—Joe Clark

The second meeting was held at the Mercy Seat church on Washington Grove Lane. Ten people attended and it became a very good discussion about organizing, identifying problems and some frank, honest talking to each other about what our expectations and methods of work are done. I believe the group has a sincere interest in making something work for the future. The representatives were from local programs sponsored by Montgomery County Government, Washington Grove, and the Emory Grove community. This is a slow process but if it is to work, it will ask more of those in the Grove than we might expect. Attitudes, hands on work, honest discussion, and some real give and take need to occur...all things which I believe are possible. The next meeting is on January 18, 2010 at the Washington Grove Methodist Church.

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 resident's homes under the banner of "smart growth."

WEB SITE—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca

Georgette Cole recommended certain modifications in relation to Planning Commission site elements. I will request Bill Saar to make sure they are addressed.

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca

I used the Yahoo Group to enlist a number of participants in a conversation about the playground and potential modernization, upkeep and potential methods to fund the project. As discussed in previous meeting, I believe this is an important topic for discussion and to be placed on the FYE 2011 budget based upon past insurance recommendations. I would like to have the Town also add my request to have attendees participate in an informal mid January conversation that will take place at Town hall.

LAKE COMMITTEE—Marida Hines

As previously reported in Jim Fletcher's Maintenance Report, the compressor on the Maple Lake bubbler quit working and had to be replaced.

RECREATION COMMITTEE—Marida Hines

'Tis the season for holiday revels, and the Recreation Committee once again outdid itself in producing the Washington Grove Holiday Extravaganza on December 12. "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 will be available soon. The backdrop-extraordinaire built by Ed Mroczka, which simulated an old-time train built into McCathran Hall's upper and lower stage, was a huge hit and is remaining in place through the holiday season by popular demand.

Other holiday events include Caroling in the Grove on December 20 and the New Year's Celebration, December 31st in McCathran Hall featuring refreshments, music, and, dancing. The Washington Grove Drawing Group, sponsored by the Recreation Committee, finished its second series of classes on Wednesday, December 17, with a grand finale 'bonus' class where students showed and critiqued works from throughout the 6-week session. The third series of

classes will start on January 6, 2010 and will cover value studies, hatching and cross hatching, still lifes, pen and ink medium, and compositional life drawing and still life. Two Digital Photography workshops ("The Mechanics of Digital Photography" and "The Art of Digital Photography"), sponsored by the Recreation Committee, were taught by professional photographer Michael Stewart and were very successful. Attendees learned principles of taking digital photographs and then were given hands-on help with their specific camera models and photographic challenges. In addition to the Photoretouching and Digital Art workshops currently scheduled for January, it was decided that Michael should return in the spring to conduct several Stroll & Shoot digital photography outings in the Grove.

MEMORIALS—Marida Hines

Nothing to report.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION—Sylvie Favret

No report.

McCATHRAN HALL—Sylvie Favret

No report.