

TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS—February 2010

CONTRACTS—Charlie Challstrom

Snow/Ice Removal Update

Our contractors and volunteers have been quite active this month with snow and ice removal in Town. We have focused on making roads passable for emergency vehicles with additional plowings, even during the snow events. We have prioritized the plowing and the spreading of sand and limited salt for road safety. Based on responses from many Town residents, our efforts have been generally successful. Complaints have continued to come from one home, and despite extra efforts for Ridge Road, I conclude this aspect of Town service will never be acceptable to residents of that home. We have responded to helpful suggestions and reports of special needs. Significant time has been spent this month with follow-up plowings and use of bobcats for cleanup, and we are awaiting a decision on a possible 75% reimbursement for Town expenditures for the major combined February event. A Presidential announcement has been made that we expect will result in approximately 75% reimbursement of the \$5,159 spent for the major December event.

Grove Alerts

Prompted by the need to inform Town residents regarding snow removal and trash/recycling schedules, the “Grove Alert” email concept was tested. To date, we have compiled and used active email addresses to reach about 200 of the 225 households in Town. Procedures and policy need to be formalized to ensure only authorized use of the collection of email addresses, and to limit use of Grove Alerts to necessary situations.

Street Lights Update

In the Maryland General Assembly, our Delegates Charlie Barkley and Kirill Reznik are co-sponsors of House Bill 169, proposing to require an electric company to install street lights designed to minimize light pollution and light trespass in certain situations. If this bill passes as presented, and should the Town approve conversion to low-wattage light emitting diodes in the future, Pepco would be required to pay the conversion costs. Any conversion to more energy efficient street lights would reduce our monthly energy costs.

FORESTRY & BEAUTIFICATION—Georgette Cole

The Forestry Committee met on Wednesday Feb 17. We discussed the planting of 50 saplings ordered from the Ayton State Tree Nursery. Due to the difficult winter Ayton has no date yet for the saplings to be dug. Since several volunteer days are already planned for April (Lake Cleanup April 10 and Arbor/Trails Day April 24) we were aiming for planting in late March. However, it isn't currently possible to predict what day would work for a general volunteer day. Because of this, Forestry has decided to seek volunteers for a smaller (not town wide) effort. This will give us more flexibility to work with the State Nursery schedule.

PLANNING COMMISSION—Georgette Cole

There was a public appearance by Eric Gompf who wished to modify his building permit to add the shed roof recommended by the HPC.

There were no other building permits to review.

The PC reviewed the new language for the building permit instructions. Modifications were incorporated and the new language was approved. It will read as follows (with thanks to Kathy Lehman for the update):

- 1.) *All permit applications must be received in the Town office seven (7) days prior to the Planning Commission meeting at which they will receive their initial review. The applicant must post a "NOTICE TO NEIGHBORS" sign within 24 hours of receiving it from the Town Clerk. The Planning Commission will not act on an application unless the NOTICE TO NEIGHBORS sign was posted in a timely fashion as confirmed by the Commission. Please note that all permit applications other than fences will be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission (an additional 30 day process). The Planning Commission will not give final approval of a permit until after the HPC has completed its work.*
- 2.) *(b.) Two (2) copies of a boundary survey with house location clearly showing proposed construction or fence and distances from proposed construction or fence to property lines and corner markers. An applicant for a fence permit who can demonstrate that the proposed fence lies within the boundaries as shown by the four (4) corner markers will not have to submit a boundary survey. Applicants should make sure the corner markers are flagged as they will need to be checked against the paperwork. Applications for permits for fences at least 10 feet from a property line and/or perpendicular to property lines not violative of setback requirements for the non-perpendicular property line do not require a boundary survey. In addition, a house location survey clearly showing proposed construction and distances from proposed construction to property lines will be accepted, in lieu of a boundary survey, for small sheds and home modifications that do not change the building's footprint.*

We discussed the change in fees for building permits. This will necessitate an ordinance revision since the fees are set in article XVI, sections 3-7. The definition of minor and major building permit may also need to be changed to reflect the use (or non-use) of the code inspector. I will consult with Charlie Challstrom on this matter.

The PC notes that it would be useful to have a good-quality metal detector available to the PC and Code inspector to facilitate location of property markers. PC recommends that said metal detector be added to the 2010-11 budget.

The Planning Commission will continue to work on permit process transparency. The old PC agenda stayed on the web site for about a week, but then disappeared. We request that Bill Saar arrange for it to be left in place until the new agenda replaces it. Eric Gleason will continue to work on the best way to track building permit status. Eric would like to use MS Access for the permit tracking process. The Planning Commission therefore recommends buying MS Office Pro (or an MS Access add-on) for the Town Office. I am including this in my budget request for fiscal 2010-11.

We are still waiting for information from the code inspector (Larry Plummer).

PC/HPC Work Sessions: Sub-group work still in progress. The next meeting will be on February 24.

MAINTENANCE—Joe Clark

See Maintenance Report in separate file.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT—Joe Clark

No report.

COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE—Joe Clark

The Community Liaison Committee has been merged with a community outreach program initiated by the Montgomery County Government, Neighbor Corp. Three Town residents, Kathie Evans, Judy Young, and Paula Puglisi attended an all-day retreat on Saturday February 20 for training in neighbor-to-neighbor organizing. There are other opportunities for others to get training.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca

Attended a meeting with County Executive Ike Leggett; Charlie and Mary also attended representing the Town.

Joined the Cable TV Committee with the County Executive and will be finding out information about the MC 311 program for tracking and addressing citizen’s issue related calls.

WEB SITE—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca

Marida bought up some very good issues and points regarding additional ways information can flow between Town Government and citizens. I had an initial conversation with Bill Saar and would recommend the conversation and potential solutions are first discussed in a Council meeting and if there is a web component then I will bring to Bill Saar for discussion on implementation.

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca

Nothing new related to Playground...recommending that the Town consider putting off the budgeting for new equipment until FY12, if the Mayor, Town Council, and Insurance carrier feels everything is fine until then.

LAKE COMMITTEE—Marida Hines

The Lake Committee met on February 18. In attendance were John Hutchinson, Bruce Rothrock, Sally Mansfield, Nancy Haskett, Judy Mroczka, Tom Land, and David H_____ (not sure of last name). The main order of business was the proposed budget, which John Hutchinson formulated and submitted to Mary Challstrom.

Lake Cleanup is tentatively scheduled for Saturday April 10th. The Lake Committee is hoping to coordinate this with anything that the Forestry, Recreation, or any other committees are planning so turn-out can be maximized for everyone’s events.

The Lake Committee is planning on transplanting some "prickly bushes" from the area to the

perimeter of the lake near the fence to help increase the barrier, and has asked the Forestry Committee if they would like to be involved.

The next Lake Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday March 11th. Agenda items for that meeting include Geese patrols, Lake Clean-up, and organizing for summer life guards and swimming instruction.

RECREATION COMMITTEE—Marida Hines

There have been no meetings since my last report. The only update is that the Martins will be performing at the Ceili Dance on Friday March 12.

MEMORIALS—Marida Hines

Nothing to report.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION—Sylvie Favret

Wednesday, February 16, 2010

Bob Booher was not in attendance and David Neumann took the lead. Architect Ralph Hurst came to the regular monthly meeting and requested a preliminary review of his building plans for a small addition to the residence of Gary and Freda Temple. The homeowners were not present at the meeting. The proposed construction consists of a small addition to enlarge the existing first floor master bathroom. It is modest in scale and compatible with the existing structure.

Following Ralph's appearance the HPC members discussed the HPC procedure about preliminary review without building permit versus basic review. They want to give an opportunity to the neighbors to be informed of future changes. The HPC is in the process of testing -and revising if need be- their procedures.

McCATHRAN HALL—Sylvie Favret

There have been ongoing discussions about Hall insulation and a potential \$5000 grant in Federal money for an energy saving project. Ann Briggs, Charlie Negin and Charlie Challstrom did a lot of research regarding this project. It looks more likely to apply for insulating the Hall ceiling and floor rather than installing AC or changing windows. The process involves a review and approval of the Maryland Historic Trust, but there appears to be no requirement for Town matching funds. It appears to be a lot of paperwork for \$5,000 but it is doable. Earlier discussions for some years about insulating the Hall ceiling and floor look like it could be a reality.