

## **TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS—March 2010**

### **CONTRACTS—Charlie Challstrom** **FEMA Reimbursement Update**

I attended the FEMA Reimbursement Process Workshop regarding the December and February winter storms. We expect a reimbursement of \$3,869 (75% of \$5,159) for the December 18-20 event. The Town spent a total of \$11,176 for the February 5-6 and 9-10 events. The February 5-6 snowfall qualifies for FEMA reimbursement, but we are awaiting a Presidential response to Governor O'Malley's request to combine the February events for purposes of FEMA's reimbursement.

### **Contract Surveys Update**

The boundary survey for Block 9 has revealed Seventh Avenue is significantly reduced from its intended 10-foot width between Block 9 and Block 16, and encroachments of Peter Nagrod's fence and porch onto First Ave and The Circle. These problems result from inconsistent historical layout of the northernmost end of Block 9. To resolve both above problems, a land swap via deeds is proposed to exchange pieces such that Seventh Avenue would correspond to the intended 10-foot width, and the Nagrod porch and fences would not encroach onto public property. After consulting with the Town's Planning Commission, I have asked Snider & Associates to place wooden stakes at the proposed locations for new survey monuments to enable all interested parties to observe and understand this proposal before we initiate a Town ordinance to authorize the deeds.

### **Energy Grant**

We received the fully executed Grant Agreement between the Town and the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) for a maximum of \$5,000 reimbursement under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. I participated in the MEA webinar to get additional guidance as we compile our proposal to insulate the floor (or crawl space) of McCathran Hall and possibly convert some of our streetlights to more energy efficient technology.

### **Street Lights Update**

Streetlight Feedback Requested – Town residents have been asked for feedback on the streetlight on Chestnut Road directly across from the Town Office. The high wattage incandescent bulb was replaced with a low-watt induction light. According to Pepco, this type of light lasts longer and is more efficient. Pepco has recently installed various induction streetlights in Garrett Park, North Chevy Chase, and Chevy Chase Section 3. Pepco has also recently installed ten light emitting diode (LED) streetlights in Somerset as a pilot effort. I have some feedback from these other towns, and we can visit them at night to view the quality of light. We would save more than half of our \$20,000 annual streetlight energy and maintenance costs with induction lights.

### **Comcast Franchise Renewal**

The original cable TV franchise for Washington Grove started in 1983, was renewed after 15 years in 1998, and comes up again for renewal in 2013. This franchise has been with a succession of corporate entities and with Comcast since 2003. The Town has separate authorized franchises with Starpower and Verizon. We have been alerted to begin prioritizing those aspects of the Comcast franchise we value the most, e.g. internet service to the Town Office, attorney cost reimbursement for negotiations, 5% franchise fee as revenue, and funding for Public Educational and Government (PEG) channels. For past cable negotiations, we have joined other cities and towns with representation by attorney David Podolsky.

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

Plans for planting the saplings are pretty much in place. We have six teams of 2-3 people and I am working on an instruction sheet, materials to hand out and location maps. Ayton has told us the saplings will be shipped March 31 and I expect to get them by Friday April 2. They will be unpacked and put in water buckets at the maintenance shed. Teams will pick them up along with tree tubes, stakes, cable ties and mycorrhizal root dip. Teams are encouraged to plant as soon as possible and in no more than 5 days. Wish us luck!

Arbor Day plans are also under way. The Woods Group is organizing a trails effort while Forestry has a beautification effort at McCathran Hall. We intend to converge around 11:30 AM with snacks, speech and an American Chestnut Planting Ceremony at McCathran.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION—Georgette Cole**

The Planning Commission met on March 3.

### **Public appearances:**

Saeed Nassehi, new owner of 121 Washington Grove Lane. He had questions on how the planning process worked.

Charlie Challstrom presented information on the Boundary Survey progress and the resulting constriction of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He proposed a land swap with Peter Nagrod that would restore 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 10 feet wide and make Nagrod's non-compliant fence and porch into compliant structures.

Georgette noted that the same block survey had resulted in a very awkward property line for 305 First Avenue. The Planning Commission moved to endorse, in principle, efforts to correct anomalies in ownership of properties at #1 The Circle and 305 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue by means of a land swap between the Town and the property owners.

A building permit for 114 Ridge Road was presented. The architect was told that all permits now must be submitted 7 days before the PC meeting and required a boundary survey as it is a major building permit.

The planning Commission reviewed the draft of ordinance 2010-04: DRAFT ORDINANCE TO AMEND ARTICLE XVI OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES REGARDING FEES FOR BUILDING PERMITS. This ordinance is attached (please take a look at it) and copies will be handed out at the Council meeting. The change will allow the town to link the cost of the building permit to the cost of using the code inspector for the permit. The PC voted to recommend approval of ordinance 2010-04 by the Town Council.

Steve Werts will be working directly with the code inspector (Larry Plummer) and we expect to have more information on several code issues in the near future.

PC/HPC Work Sessions: Bob Evans reviewed the progress to date of the joint PC/HPC committee on Mansionization. Eric Gleason gave a presentation on using FAR in conjunction with our current ordinances. Eric has produced some really good ideas and the PC agreed that the FAR sub-group proposal ought to be formalized. All of the sub-groups are to come up with a plan that could be presented to the town as a tool for averting extremes of what is commonly referred to as 'mansionization'. The next joint PC/HPC meeting will be on April 28. We hope to have material that could be presented to the town for discussion and feedback in May.

## **MAINTENANCE—Joe Clark**

See Maintenance Report in separate file.

The Maintenance Committee has been appointed by the Mayor: Joe Clark, Chair, Sylvie Favret, Council representative, John Tomlin, Bud O'Conner, and Sandy Klingenberg. The charge to the committee is to consider 3 options:

- Full-time maintenance person
- Half-time contractor and the rest (probably less than half-time) maintenance person.
- Full-time contractors.

The Mayor’s Special Committee on Maintenance will submit a final report to the Mayor and Town Council within the following scope:

What tasks currently performed by our maintenance staff should be expected in the future? A list has been provided by Jim Fletcher that should be used to begin this assessment. In addition, Town Council members have provided a list of interactions between Jim and their committees that should be assessed in this same way.

1. What tasks expected in the future can be contracted out? What tasks could probably only be done by in-house staff?
2. Compare the costs of each of the situations in Scope item #2.
3. For each potential option listed below, tell the advantages and disadvantages regarding the needs of the Town and the associated costs. These 3 options are:
  - o Continue to provide Town services with paid staff.
  - o Contract out all maintenance services.
  - o A mix of the two other options, although specific tasks should be recommended for Town-paid staff and contract staff.
  - o What tasks should be eliminated under any of the other options.
4. What is the committee’s strongest recommendation to the Mayor and Town Council regarding maintenance in the future?

**Process**

The Mayor’s Special Committee on Maintenance will need to complete its work in time for review by the Town Council in May. A tentative end date is May 10. They may call on others for help at different points.

The committee will meet 4 times and have a report to the Council and Mayor in early May.

**PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT—Joe Clark**

There have been minor incidents but no major problems.

**COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE—Joe Clark**

The group with which we had been working is now under the leadership of the County’s Neighborhood Corps and the training should be completed by the end of April. At that time, it is hoped that some structure will develop which will allow a more organized interaction with the neighboring communities to the Grove.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca**

As per MML direction, sent my resume for review and recommendation to the Cable Committee.

**WEB SITE—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca**

Nothing to report

**PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS—Ted “Kelly” Ventresca**

Had meeting with Long Fence and received a quote from Long Fence that will be presented at the Council meeting. We are awaiting two other bids.

## **LAKE COMMITTEE—Marida Hines**

The Lake Committee met on Thursday March 11th. Topics covered included:

### **Geese**

Karen Himmelberger is monitoring the Lake for geese on a semi-daily basis. Although some have put in appearances, the mating pair from last year has not yet reappeared. If they do, Ann Shapiro will lead a team to addle (oil) the eggs so they do not hatch.

### **Budget**

The Lake Committee prepared and submitted its 2011 budget.

### **Clean-up**

The Lake Clean Up is set for April 10th/rain date April 11th. This has been scheduled in conjunction with the Woods Group to avoid a date conflict.

### **Gate combo**

The lake combination will be changed in mid-April.

### **Life Guards**

Marida Hines will be organizing this with assistance from Karen Lottes and Bill Garoni. As of this writing, we have firm commitments for fulltime work from 3 former lifeguards, two firm commitments to work part time, and one potential (have not heard back). We will be advertising for guards in the next Bulletin.

### **Swimming Instructor(s)**

Tom Land is organizing this.

### **Lake Maintenance**

Preparations for summer season will be ongoing over the coming months:

- Order and install barley bales, order Cutrine
- Test the water for coliforms & pH early June and late July
- diving board will be reinstalled
- Mow and trim lawn areas and wild roses, remove litter, spray for poison ivy in woods between entrance and shed as needed, clear parking area of branches and debris
- Test and repair/charge (as needed) cordless phone, shed light, surveillance cameras, pump and aeration system, fence, gate, and lock, dock and bridge, signs, holes in fence

### **Security**

Preparation for the summer season include making sure the phones work, emergency numbers are posted, and Sergeant McNeal of MCPD has the most up to date gate combination. As last summer was relatively incident-free, we will not be hiring a guard this summer.

Next Lake Committee meeting will be April 15th at 7:30 pm.

## **RECREATION COMMITTEE—Marida Hines**

There have been no meetings since my last report.

The Recreation Committee, however, formulated and submitted a budget for FY 2011. Highlights included adding funding for a New Year's Party and the Blues-ToberFest which were very popular last year. Some adjustments were made to existing program funding including a lower figure for paying musicians at Music Weekend and less for purchasing prizes for the 4th of July competition.

Summer in the Parks is humming along, with teachers being hired and children being signed up.

The Washington Grove Drawing Group Art Show is scheduled for May 2, 2010.

**MEMORIALS—Marida Hines**

Nothing to report.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION—Sylvie Favret**

Did not attend the most recent HPC meeting.

**McCATHRAN HALL—Sylvie Favret**

No Report.