

COUNCIL REPORTS

February 2014

FORESTRY – Audrey Maskery

Forestry and Beautification: Forestry and Beautification took advantage of reduced winter prices under a contract with Myers & Laws Tree service to remove one dead tree and grind out the stump on 102 Center Street plus a large tree leaning dangerously in Zoe Wadsworth Park. Trees were also pruned around the tennis court and playground area. To continue improving public safety this regular pruning program has been added to the 2015 budget for Forestry.

Woods Group: The Woods Group sponsored a successful meeting on February 19. Two guest speakers, John Parrish, Forest Ecologist and Pat Klein, Veterinarian provided very interesting information on forestry ecology and diseases that wild life can carry. The aim of the meeting was to provide a backdrop of information to the town on the ecology of both the West Woods and East Woods.

Next Woods Group meeting: March 6, 2014 at 7.30 pm in Council Room.

MEMORIALS – Audrey Maskery

Nothing to report.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION – Joli A. McCathran

Projects/CSX Bridge: CSX filed a Town building permit application for its planned alteration/raising of the bridge. The Planning Commission and Town will comment on the CSX “70%” plans, together with the specifications and other attachments submitted with the building permit application. The Historic Preservation Commission will provide its comments to the Mayor and Planning Commission. Comments will also be sent to the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission.

Council Report: Joli McCathran reported the Town Council agreed advice from the Town attorney, in regards to the Historic Preservation’s review of building plans, should be received from counsel in writing.

Planning Commission Meeting Report: Ralph Hurst presented a revised plan for Ryan Young and Emily Brown’s home on Grove Avenue. Some concerns were raised. The Planning Commission is considering asking all homeowners to complete a compliance survey, which would be provided to new owners to put them on notice of any non-compliance.

Railroad St Master Plan: There is no money to implement a Railroad Street Master Plan in the current budget. The goal would be to establish a sense of place for the Grove. Elements would be located at Town boundaries and entrances. Goals/elements are safety, natural setting/green, benches, and more MARC presence to encourage more trains at Washington Grove. Joli McCathran added that the Town Council is looking to establish a fund to purchase border areas if they come up for sale. It appears a separate Railroad Street Master Plan would be too expensive; building this into the next Town Master Plan would be more feasible.

Follow-up on Joint Meeting: Reviving the inclusion of information about the Historic Preservation Commission and early review in the welcome package would be a good idea. Freda Temple and Brenda Gumula drafted some language to consider for the PC’s project review procedure regarding early review. The Historic Preservation Commission voted to

substitute Freda Temples and Brenda Gumula's language for the first section of the Planning Commission procedures.

PARKS and PLAYGROUNDS – Joli A. McCathran

Concerns are being expressed about metal detectors being used on Town property. As of now there are no ordinances or resolutions restricting this activity. The Town Council will review this matter.

WASHINGTON GROVE CONSERVATION MEADOW PARK – Joli A. McCathran

Nothing to report.

MAPLE LAKE - Carolyn Rapkievian

There are a couple of new guards that might be interested in life-guarding this summer. Dave Harmon is coordinating.

The Committee is contacting previous instructors for this year's lessons. Lake Clean-up Day will be April 12/13. Committee Chair, John Hutchinson is coordinating. The planting of aquatic plants will be undertaken by Bruce Rothrock and John Hutchinson. The lock combination will be changed soon. Due to stretches of cold weather, there was excellent skating at the lake. Safety equipment was in place. The bubbler will be turned back on after skating season. The 2014 Maple Lake Plunge was the biggest jump yet: 14 people jumped into Maple Lake, which was nearly covered with a thick blanket of soft, slushy ice.

The next lake meeting will be on Thursday, March 20th at 7:30.

SAFETY – Carolyn Rapkievian

In an effort to improve communications between the Town and the Montgomery County Police Department, Mayor Georgette Cole, Town Clerk Kathy Lehman, Carolyn Rapkievian (Town Council Representative in charge of safety), Charlie Challstrom (Chair of the Town Planning Commission) and Keith Gillis (Neighborhood Watch Coordinator) met with Officer Scott Zimmerman, 6th District Community Service Officer. It was agreed that Officer Zimmerman's points of contact for routine and emergency communications would be Kathy in the Town Office and the Mayor. Officer Zimmerman gave the group the names of the appropriate lieutenants to contact if he is not available. The closing of the railroad crossing and the resulting traffic problems was discussed to review more effective communications in the future. In addition, a Town information session on property safety was proposed for late spring.

WEBSITE – Carolyn Rapkievian

Carolyn Rapkievian developed a draft survey that is being tested by selected residents in preparation for sending the on-line survey to town residents in order to get input about Town website. The Survey Monkey questionnaire will be administered in the near future.

ROADS AND WALKWAYS – Bill Robertson

Snow removal was performed in-house using Town equipment and personnel. No contractual labor was utilized. The extension of Locust Lane and a portion of Sixth Avenue were omitted when Town Maintenance took over plowing because the areas in question are gravel. It was pointed out that they have been covered by Town snow plowing contracts since 1983. Accordingly these areas have been added to the areas Steve clears.

The two snow storms this year have highlighted the need for additional equipment. Two (2) two-stage snow blowers are needed to handle clearing the sidewalks on Washington Grove Lane. These will be useful elsewhere in Town as well. Our backup contractor, R&J Landscaping, has several fairly new ones his company no longer uses since they don't do sidewalk clearing any longer. We would be able to buy these for about half the price of new ones and Steve will refurbish them with new belts.

Road bids for paving lower Ridge Road are coming in for opening on March 10th.

MAINTENANCE – Bill Robertson

Completed rehab of the both Hustler mowers and one (1) John Deere lawn tractor.

Completed work on deep root watering machine/sprayer.

Winter maintenance on various pieces of Town equipment continues.

Town Hall heat registers were cleaned, repaired and painted.

Ceiling fans in Town Hall were lowered, handrail to the stage was repaired, spot lights were repositioned and blinds were repaired.

Completed design and manufacture of a folding chair storage rack on wheels.

Serviced handicapped lift in the Town Hall.

Replaced flushing mechanism of women's room toilet.

Continued clean-up of invasive species on Political Hill.

Supervised winter tree work.

CONTRACTS – Greg Silber

Another significant winter storm and another outstanding job by Town maintenance in keeping our roads clear. Many thanks to Steve and his dedicated crew!

Potomac Disposal has requested an increase in its billing amounts to offset an increase in the cost of diesel fuel. The request is for a \$0.20 per unit per month fuel surcharge. The expected increase would result an additional \$225 this fiscal year and \$540 in the next (\$45/month). The company has also indicated it expects a market correction in fuel costs in the coming months and will reduce or eliminate the surcharge if/when that occurs.

RECREATION COMMITTEE – Greg Silber

The Recreation Committee meets Wednesday 16 April at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Room.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL – Greg Silber

Nothing to report.

MCCATHRAN HALL – David Young

A meeting of the Town Hall Needs Committee was held on February 18 to discuss and make draft recommendations for budget items for FY 2015. At the February 10, 2014 Town Council meeting, the bid from Jupiter Systems for \$7,895 was accepted to paint the Hall windows.

PLANNING COMMISSION – David Young

Permit Applications: The building permit application for an addition at 404 Grove Avenue was approved pending receipt of a boundary survey.

Public Ways and Property Permit Applications: Chairman Challstrom reported that Clark Construction sent their permit fee along with the 70% CSX Plan for the Deer Park Bridge area.

After discussion, the following recommendations were made: Comments to CSX on the plan should come from the Planning Commission, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Mayor along with a request for a face-to-face meeting with Mr. Dobson from CSX. It was suggested comments should come from the Bridge Advisory Group as well.

Railroad Street Improvement Plan: The Planning Commission will craft a plan of action and engage others for comment/revisions. A work session on the Plan will be held March 27.

Other business: The Chairman reported that Snider & Associates will do boundary surveys for 403 McCauley St. and 333 McCauley St. properties at a reduced rate to the homeowners in conjunction with the Town-contracted survey of Block 6.