

TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS

APRIL 2015

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION – Georgette Cole

Archives: Patricia Patula presented a 2014 Archival Annual Report to the HPC for their review and guidance. Discussion followed on the items which need to be addressed, with HPC members agreeing to assist (subgroup) in working out the details, evaluating priorities and scheduling a work session for more in-depth discussions at a later date. Town archives projects that need to be addressed are:

Collection Care (State storage vs. local, IE: our current archives storage area)

Records Management (Website, Town Documents, Oral Histories, Photographs, Equipment)

Public Education (Advancement of the history of the Grove)

Montgomery Preservation Awards: The Washington Grove Humpback Bridge was honored by MPI for "Recreation of a Historic Landmark." On Friday evening, March, 27th Mimi Styles, for the HPC, and Georgette Cole, as Council Liaison to the HPC, attended the annual awards ceremony. MPI recognized the creativity of the curved I-beam solution which allowed the Town to retain its landmark entry point while giving CSX the clearance to move double stack freight loads and providing Montgomery Department of Transportation with a safer bridge structure.

Annual Budget: The first draft of the 2016 budget for the HPC has been submitted to the Town Council for review. After further discussion, the Commission will send additional recommendations to Mary Challstrom for review:

1. Allowance for repair or replacement of the defective scanner currently being used in the office for scanning archival documents.
2. Add \$1,500.00 to the budget for three plaques: one to help identify the historic significance of Political Hill; one for the entrance to the Town, and, another one to identify the Town as a National Registered Historical District.
3. Increase the monthly number of hours to 50 for the Archivist (the budget currently allows for 40 hours).
4. Budget \$500.00 in funds to allow HPC members to attend statewide conferences.

Enabling Ordinance for Permanent Easements: Georgette Cole reported a Public Hearing has been set for April 13th pertaining to Ordinance 2015-03. This ordinance will replace 2014-03. The Town Attorney, as requested by the Mayor and Council, has made changes to clarify the role of the HPC. The Planning Commission has recommended addition of Gail's whereas clauses. A motion was made by Mimi Styles, seconded by Gail Littlefield, to request one more month for the HPC to review consideration of the language in the document. The motion carried 3-0. An authorized representative of the HPC will make this request at the public hearing.

Eva's Polston's House (203 2nd Avenue): Gail has agreed to draft language to ensure the historical integrity features from Ralph Hurst's design plans are incorporated into the records of the new house.

SHADY GROVE CROSSING – Georgette Cole

We have been approached by the President of the Shady Grove Crossing Homeowners Association, Nasim Ahmed, to consider a joint event to let our respective residents get to know each other. Nasim Ahmed and Greg Silber will talk to the Recreation Committee at their next meeting on April 15.

WASHINGTON GROVE MEADOW CONSERVATION PARK – Georgette Cole

I've inspected the new trees added to the Meadow Park. Although resident comments regarding the straight-line planting are accurate, we understand from the Parks Department it is needed for future mowing. The trees themselves are beautiful; they are large and look healthy. I counted twenty seven (27) south of the diagonal path across the field and twenty nine (29) north of it.

WOODS GROUP - Cindy Frei

FACT FINDING MISSION:

Charlie Challstrom, Elly Briggs, Tom Land, Deb Mehlferber, Bruce Rothrock, Ann Briggs:
Monday, March 23

- Woods Group Boundary Search
- East Woods extension of Boundary Street
- West Woods along Town/Saybrooke border

The Survey team, led by Charlie Challstrom, had a productive start. We will be scheduling additional workdays in both the East and West Woods. With spring growth due to get underway within the next month or so, specific boundary areas will be selected for work, depending on their potential accessibility. This will not be part of our April 25 Arbor Day Volunteer Trail Work morning.

CONCLUSIONS:

East Woods Boundary with Boundary Street - a split rail and wire fence was installed some years back running from driveway of abutting neighbor's property along Boundary Street (17601 Silver Dollar Court) that significantly intrudes into the Town East Woods border, possibly to deter people from farther up Washington Grove Lane from cutting through their driveway area into the woods. The house has just been listed by Remax Realty for sale. This is an opportune time to correct this intrusion by:

- 1.) Notifying the property owner AND the Remax sales agent of the intrusion and of the corrective action to be taken by the Town
- 2.) Scheduling Town Maintenance work hours to remove fence from current position and aligning it to run along the Town boundary along Boundary Street toward Washington Grove Lane. This work should be scheduled before spring growth gets underway, if possible, and completed before sale of adjacent property.

East Woods Boundary Fence Along Border with Apartments - The Town boundary fence, installed about 30 years ago, is in need of routine maintenance as follows:

- 1.) Based on inspection and assessment by Town Maintenance, the fence that sags down at the top for stretches and consequently pushes out at the bottom should be wired back into

position to maintain its efficiency and appearance. The work is not as time sensitive as #1 above.

West Woods Boundary Markers Along Border with Saybrooke SF Homes - All residences along this border appear to be occupied. All but two survey markers now have been located and tagged. Several properties have extended their yards into the woods, although most by a few feet in depth and with plantings. The initial lot (11 St. Ives Place) that overlooks Gaithersburg City's Kelley Park Ball fields has installed a split rail and wire fence on a corner that extends into the West Woods. A huge old dump is semi-buried within a large portion of our woods some yards from the border. This precedes the Saybrooke development and could be an extensive workday for Town volunteers in the future.

CONCLUSIONS: The Town, with appropriate notice to the City of Gaithersburg, should advise the offending residents in this area of:

- 1.) ongoing Town efforts - as part of the development of a long term Forest Management Plan - to mark the boundaries of our woods, as recommended by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- 2.) the specific intrusion into the Woods of certain lots which the Town recognizes and of which the owners also should be aware. In the event of any considered sale of the offending properties, the Town and all real estate company representatives (as applicable) should be notified, as should all prospective purchasers. Prior to any change of ownership, the intrusion into the Town woods must be corrected by the homeowner who is responsible for notifying the Town of the correction. Charlie Challstrom is working on a draft of this recommendation that will be forwarded to the Mayor and Council for action.

ROADS & WALKWAYS – Cindy Frei

Nothing to report.

FORESTRY & BEAUTIFICATION-Audrey Maskery

Two large oaks removed, one from car park at Town Hall, the other from Oak Street. The canopy in both trees had been failing for a number of years, and both had decay fungi (conks). The oak on Oak Street had also been treated twice for borers. Both stumps have been ground out the parking area close to Town Hall will receive additional gravel, Oak Street will be leveled and grass seed spread between Grove Avenue and Chestnut Road. Wood from both trees cut left for town citizens own use. Pepco have mapped the trees they wish to prune. The pruning should take place sometime in April.

MAINTENANCE-Audrey Maskery

Potholes filled, crosswalks painted. Walk/steps in Wade Park refurbished finishing the area at Political Hill. The bubbler turned on in Maple Lake ready for the season. Trash cleared on Brown and Railroad Street. A new Mantis tiller purchased for use in small gardens around Town Hall and other Town owned property. Footings for maintenance shed started, but wet weather delayed completion.

MEMORIALS-Audrey Maskery

Nothing to report.

PLANNING COMMISSION – John McClelland

Permit Applications:

- 118 Grove Ave – 4’ fence approved. The current 6’ fence is located on Town property so meeting ordinance height requirements was deemed appropriate as the fence’s location will move.
Note: 206 Chestnut Ave 6’ fence replacement (approximately 30’ in length and originally reported as a repair) was not viewed as a violation of Town ordinance as it matched the prior 6’ fence and is located entirely on private property.
- 402 Grove Ave – pergola approved
- 104 Pine Ave – Solar panels approved

PC Permit Process:

The Historic Preservation Commission expressed concern regarding their place in the building permit review process. They feel that a building permit should not be accepted until after the HPC has reviewed it. The PC acknowledged the advisory capacity of the HPC and suggested a more proactive approach in promoting their knowledge and expertise. Workshop offerings, a HPC brochure, monthly suggestions added to the Town Bulletin etc. were presented as ways to promote the value of the HPC.

Public ways & Property Permit:

312 Center St – Town garage/shop addition approved

Town Boundary:

- Silver Dollar Ct – A split rail fence located on Town property is to be removed. The current owner expressed issues with nonresident vehicle parking and trash. No parking signs (on the Town side of Boundary St) and vehicle permitting were presented as possible options.
- St. Ives Place (Saybrooke) – Christine Jackson (owner) agreed to remove a trampoline and tire swing currently encroaching in the west woods from Town property.

Harrison Property Subdivision: 17050 Railroad St –Sheryl Harrison presented a preliminary subdivision plan listing four total buildable lots (including the current structure). A 100’ forest conservation area is included across the rear of the properties (near the RR tracks). Bob Booher (HPC) reinforced one provision of the RR-4 Cluster zone criteria “the proposed development would be compatible and extend the sense of community within the Town” by recommending a similar Town home orientation with a gravel walkway located between them. With 2 homes on either side of the gravel walkway it was then linked to a proposed Maple Avenue across Railroad St. Other home design elements were also presented (front porches, allow detached garage to be in forest conservation area etc...). The RR-4 cluster zone was approved assuming one developer for the entire project. Concern was expressed regarding potential individual lot sales and the Town’s increased responsibility for lot owners to meet the RR-4 cluster zone criteria. One advantage of individual sales would be unique style homes vs. developer cookie cutter units.

MAPLE LAKE-Carolyn Rapkivian

Lake Clean-up was Saturday, April 11. Goose eggs were oiled earlier in the month to prevent them from hatching. Steve Werts cut up a fallen tree behind the dock covering the outflow and is getting barley for the lake. John Hutchinson administered blue dye to the water to discourage pond weed. Mary Challstrom sent in the contract for NatureWorksCWA and Marty Miesco will be visiting our lake soon to treat for Algae. The planting of corkscrew willow trees at the lake was requested.

Maple Lake will be open weekends starting with (and including) Memorial Day (May 23,24,25), daily when school lets out June 12 until school resumes August 31, and Labor Day weekend (Sept 5,6,7).

David Harmon is coordinating the hiring of lifeguards. David and Hutch are coordinating training and supervision. Tom Land and Emily Brown are coordinating swim instructors for lessons which will be offered on the same days as Summer in the Parks (July 7 - 30). The lock combination will change on April 20. The PEPCO line is sagging between poles in woods – a request was sent for repair. The next lake committee meeting will be Thursday, April 16.

SAFETY- Carolyn Rapkivian

Wendy Harris and Shelley Winkler have asked public officials to investigate whether the location of Roberts Oxygen, the current usage of the CSX tracks for oil tanker cars and the adjacent T-intersection, present an unacceptable risk to the community. They plan to make a presentation at the April Council meeting.

WEBSITE- Carolyn Rapkivian

Start-up, creative phase is in process.

RECREATION – Greg Silber

This year's Music Weekend has been announced for the weekend of 19 June.

The Committee's next scheduled meeting is 15 April, 7:30PM.

PLAYGROUNDS – Greg Silber

The Council has discussed and is expected to provide funds in the coming fiscal year for a number of playground upgrades including the possibility of adding new surfaces in some areas.

CONTRACTS – Greg Silber

The Council selected Potomac Disposal for its refuse/recycle pick-up contract. Mayor McCathran and I met with Green Earth leaf removal contractor representatives to discuss plans for next year to better address lingering leaf piles: piles will be picked-up on a rotational (by section of the Town) basis. Mayor McCathran and I discussed status of the preparation and the timing of a Town Forest Management Plan with Bill Bond of Parkton Woodland Services. The draft and final plans are expected in the fall.