

## **TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS JULY 13, 2020 MEETING**

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION – Darrell Anderson**

The HPC held a virtual meeting on June 16; the next meeting will be held on July 21 at 7:30 pm by virtual means.

The HPC reviewed a permit application for a planned patio cover at 107 Pine Street (Sivula[sp]). Discussions involved the placement and amount of coverage of the patio cover.

The HPC also informally reviewed elevations for the new house to be built on the 326 Ridge Road, which is a subdivision (Golden). Guidance was provided to Mr. Golden.

A lengthy discussion of the Public Ways Permit resulted in the HPC developing a list of recommendations. Members will be involved on the group being formed by the PC to develop a draft permit. In searches of past permits, there has been some inconsistencies in the process, which will be addressed in this revision.

The HPC sent a copy of the Town's National Historic Register materials to Kyle to support our position on the proposed bikeway and Amity extension roadway.

The HPC submitted an award nomination to Montgomery Preservation for the street sign project earlier this year. A week after this meeting, the Town was notified that the street sign project (Susan Van Nostrand as organizer) has won the award.

As part of Masterplan review process, the HPC will be developing a list of orphan resources to make sure all of the historic resources are included in the accepted sections of the masterplan.

### **Lighting Committee**

The Lighting Committee held a virtual meeting on June 24; the next meeting will be held on July 22 at 7:30 pm by virtual means.

The LC has had negotiations with PEPCO regarding the conversion of our existing induction street lamps to LED bulbs. Through the database developed by Charlie Challstrom, PEPCO now understands which specific lights should be converted (approximately 95). We still will have some sodium vapors lights. The conversion will take place soon.

A broken PEMCO light fixture was photographed and sent to a California firm that fabricates lighting fixtures. We are waiting to hear from the vendor and to get a cost estimate.

A survey of residents impacted by the missing walkway light at Oak Street and Grove Avenue found that all but one resident did not care if the light was replaced.

The Committee submitted comments to the Master Plan Committee regarding walkway lighting, which included different types of possible lighting.

Bob Booher provided information on Maryland Energy grants that may allow the Town to receive expert advice during our lighting process at no cost to the Town. He will follow up on this information.

## **MAINTENANCE – Darrell Anderson**

Again, spent much of the month cutting grass and trimming brush along roads and walkways.

Cleaned the ditch in the park.

Moved an older bench from The Circle to Wade Park. Put a new bench in The Circle (for F&B).

Rolled, watered, and swept the clay courts for their reopening.

Met with Hutch and Bruce at the lake to look at sink holes in the West Woods.

Met at McCathran Hall with a representative from Guardian Fire for the 3-year air test of the sprinkler system.

Cleaned around the dumpster and compacted brush.

Checked on the Washington Gas project on Chestnut Avenue.

Worked on projects in the Maintenance Shop.

Checked on a large limb that fell on Chestnut Avenue near the Newman house.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION – Charlie Challstrom**

### **Building Permit Activity –**

- 107 Pine Ave – PC approved permit for 12 ft x 21 ft roof cover over an existing patio
- 103 Grove Ave – PC approved permit for 7 ft x 8 ft Santa Barbara redwood greenhouse

**Commercial Corner Discussions** – During the July 1 PC meeting, some concepts were shared from summary notes of Downtown Revitalization Strategies, an online session held during the 2-day Maryland Municipal League Annual Conference. These concepts may be applicable to our Commercial Corner, for example:

- Expand the foot traffic (usually associated with retail and food establishments)
- Link to government office (we have Post Office where most residents get their mail)
- Partnership – government & private sector (regulatory/zoning, investments)
- Focus on quality of place – distinctive location, place-making matters, feeling safe/comfortable, soul of the community, where significant building matters, uncover and preserve historic integrity (e.g. remove façade on “Odd Fellows Hall” portion)
- Moving forward -- develop a vision (e.g. Master Plan), test concept with low-hanging fruit, build support with incremental success, explore community-supported enterprises

**Master Plan 2020 Update** – A master plan work session was held on June 17 focusing on the new Master Plan Section 11 submitted by the Emergency Preparedness and Safety Committee. Another master plan work session was held on July 7 to meet with Consultant Larry Stott regarding “best use” perspectives on small commercial properties. The next PC master plan work session is scheduled for July 15 to discuss potential changes to Section 8 (Commercial Corner); new proposed updates for Section 3.4 (Railroad Corridor) and Section 3.6 (Humpback

Bridge/Railroad Street); a new submission on Section 4.5 (Streetlights/Walkways) from the Lighting Committee; and proposed revisions for Section 10 (Interjurisdictional Issues).

**Washington Grove Lane Sidewalk Obstructions** – The PC discussed current obstructions that hinder safe pedestrian use of the Washington Grove Lane sidewalk, notably plants and branches adjacent to and over the sidewalk. The PC has suggested establishing a policy for a 3-foot (or wider?) cleared/mowed strip for all public land adjacent to the sidewalk. Questions to be resolved include maintenance responsibility for such a strip, and how this maintenance relates to current maintenance of other portions of public rights of way. The PC appreciates that Town Maintenance clears the Washington Grove Lane sidewalk during winter snow/ice events.

**Walkway Connection to Shady Grove Crossing** – The PC notes deterioration of the former grass walkway connection between the Town and Shady Grove Crossing at a bend of Ridge Road. The area was disturbed during recent WSSC work to provide water line connection for 326 Ridge Road. On the Application for Public Ways and Property Permit signed by WSSC, it states “WSSC will restore the street and any disturbed R/W areas.” The PC is uncertain if WSSC had re-seeded the walkway area before a nearby neighbor placed wood chips in the disturbed area. Those wood chips were washed away during recent heavy rains. A representative of Shady Grove Crossing is being contacted to help evaluate if the walkway connection should be grass or gravel after WSSC completes its water connection work.

#### **MCCATHRAN HALL – Charlie Challstrom**

Mayor Compton has responded to the Montgomery County Board of Elections to confirm that McCathran Hall would be available as an “in person” polling venue for the November elections, barring a resurgence of COVID-19 or other health concern. According to Mary Beth Habel, this inquiry was just a “head count” during this time of uncertainty, and Mary Beth will follow up with us as soon as the State provides some guidance for November.

#### **MONTGOMERY MUNICIPAL CABLE (MMC) – Charlie Challstrom**

We are grateful to the MMC 3-person video production team for technical assistance and for streaming of the Washington Grove Youth Recital as part of Music Weekend. The Recital was broadcast on both Comcast and Verizon MMC Channel 16 on Saturday, June 20. For the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, MMC provided a short compilation video from past celebrations of some municipalities, including Washington Grove. Videos of these current and past events, and also for the Washington Grove Sign Restoration Project, continue to be available for streaming on the MMC YouTube Channel.

#### **CENSUS – Charlie Challstrom**

**Census Status and Activities** – As of July 1, 82 % of Washington Grove households have responded, according to the Census response rates website. After consultation with Mayor Compton, I posted some Census signs along Washington Grove Lane and Railroad Street with reminders to complete the Census. On July 1, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that it will begin following up with households that have not yet responded to the 2020 Census in a small number of locations in July. Based on the current national self-response rate of 61.8%, the Census Bureau estimates it will need to visit approximately 56 million addresses to collect responses in person. Households can still respond now by completing and mailing back the paper questionnaire they received or by responding online at 2020census.gov or by phone at 844-330-2020.

**CONTRACTS – Dave Cosson**

Nothing to report.

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – Dave Cosson**

The Committee met on June 9, 2020 by Zoom and discussed the following:

**Department of Permitting Services Webinar** – Residents should avoid altering the natural flow of water through their property to the detriment of their neighbors; permits and a drainage plan are required where more than 5,000 square feet are disturbed. The Rainscapes and other grant program can help residents create more environmentally sound landscapes. Support for installation of permeable pavement is up to \$14 per square foot.

**Planned Meetings** – A meeting with County officials and Gaithersburg is planned but not yet scheduled to discuss responsibilities for water flow at Town boundaries.

**County Hazard Mitigation re Railroad Street** – Discussions are ongoing with county officials regarding improving the water flow through the pipe under Railroad Street to eliminate flooding in Morgan Park and across Brown Street. It may turn out that a FEMA grant application will be needed if the County can't do the job.

**West Woods Watershed** – A combined effort with the Lake and Woods Committees and maintenance staff removed downed trees that were creating erosion channels and rearranged the soil to create better dispersal. Further work to protect the area, including the lake fence and shed will be needed. The Committee intends to work on an RFP for consulting assistance.

The next meeting of the Committee will be July 14, 2020 by Zoom.

**WOODS COMMITTEE – Dave Cosson**

The Committee met on July 6, 2020 by Zoom and discussed the following topics:

**Tree Policy for East and West Woods** – A draft policy for evaluation and action regarding trees that pose a public safety hazard to trail users or adjoining properties was discussed. The policy also mentions removal and replacement of non-native trees. Edits to the draft will be incorporated and a final version adopted at the next meeting.

**Tree Plantings** – The Woods Committee received a donation of eight native trees (oaks and black gum) from the Maryland Forest Service which were planted in the East Woods. The committee will schedule time to install deer protection around the new trees and will need volunteers to help.

**Removal on Non-native Invasive Plants** – The Town's contractor, IPC, finished its Spring/Summer work in June, prior to the end of the FY20 fiscal year and budgeted funds. Herbicide treatments to reduce non-native invasive plants. were done in the East Woods for wisteria and Japanese knotweed, and in the West Woods for pachysandra, paulownia, wisteria, and wavy leaf basket grass.

**Deer Management** – The Town Council postponed approval of the Committee's introduced Resolution 2020-08, re-authorizing a managed deer bow hunt for the 2020-21season, to provide

residents an opportunity to comment. The Woods Committee posted a request for comments in the July Town Bulletin. Two written comments with questions about metrics and other population control options were received by WC and discussed at its July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Committee agreed the best metric is to monitor the re-emergence and recovery of the Woods' native plants and trees from the years of over-browsing. This will require at least 5 years to see significant changes. It was also noted that no adverse incidents occurred during the hunt last year, which was largely invisible to residents, and that there are some anecdotal observations of recovery of native flora in the Woods. The WC Deer Management Plan is being updated for discussion at the July Town Council.

**Trail Maintenance** – The Committee continued its discussions on options to improve designated trails in the Woods, and to discourage un-authorized trail blazing. The spreading of wooden chips helps to define and reinforce existing trails but other options are needed. The Committee is gathering information on MC Parks and US Forest Service trail maintenance practices for consideration. A Town resident has volunteered to trim vegetation encroaching on the trails to keep paths open and reduce tick exposure.

The next meeting of the Committee will be August 2, 2020 by Zoom.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS WORK GROUP – Marida Hines**

Nothing to report.

#### **DOG PARK – Marida Hines**

Nothing to report.

#### **RECREATION – Marida Hines**

The next meeting of the Recreation Committee is Wednesday, August 20, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend this virtual meeting via ZOOM.

Music weekend had been the subject of some concern about how to maintain social distancing, but ultimately several livestreamed events took place the weekend of June 19. On Friday night, Keith Gillis organized a Virtual Happy hour and music featuring Eddy Viscosity and the Turbulent Core & Friends, billed as “an eclectic mix of socially distanced NIST and Grove musicians in masks.” Due to rain, the live-streamed event was moved into Town Hall, with musicians at safe distances. The event was followed by 80 people online and several onlookers from outside. On Saturday morning, the children’s performance, organized by Sam Beres, was filmed by Montgomery Munciple Cable and livestreamed on their channel. The event received high praise for the quality of the musicianship and it is available for viewing on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/lrryjYuftwQ>.

Recreation Committee leader Emily Cavey enlisted her boundless creativity to ensure the Town had a Fourth of July with a bang while still respecting social distancing guidelines. On Saturday, July 4, townsfolk were encouraged to come out of their homes in their “finest, funniest, fabulous-est Fourth of July costume,” and stand streetside to “join the parade!” as Emily drove through Town filming them. Later, judges viewed the video and originated the costume awards, and it all came together in a late afternoon ZOOM call that included music, a virtual parade, Mayor Compton’s Independence Day address, and the awards ceremony. Despite the appearance of a

hacker who interrupted the festivities with online graffiti (and was quickly shut out of the call), the event was a great substitute for the real thing and was much appreciated. Traditional Summer in the Parks activities have been cancelled due to the coronavirus health situation, but some virtual activities for children are happening. Judy Mroczka organized with storyteller Noa Baum to hold virtual events on Wednesday, July 8 for pre-K- 2nd grade listeners and on Thursday, July 9, 10 a.m. for listeners in grades 3-6.

There are no events currently planned for August, and it is anticipated the Labor Day Games will not take place for safety reasons.

#### **WEBSITE – Marida Hines**

Routine maintenance and content updates continue with no issues. A preliminary plan for addressing some issues identified by the Communications Working Group survey and Web Usability Test effort has been created and will be further developed in collaboration with the Town webmaster.

#### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & SAFETY COMMITTEE – Pat Klein**

The EPSC met on June 25, 2020 via Zoom to discuss their actions on the following topics.

The Committee recalled the Town Council (TC) June meeting deliberations on the resumption of town functions and activities which should be in alignment with Montgomery County (MC) Orders for Phase 2 reopening. EPSC had submitted recommendations to the TC for a safe reopening process in town. Committee members agreed to continue to monitor state and MC Orders and advise the Mayor and TC on issues that could impact town public health such as Maple Lake use and public gatherings. EPSC also discussed the possibility of consulting with county health officials to obtain clarity on reopening orders if needed.

The Town Council introduced and immediately adopted Resolution 2020-09 (Maple Lake Policy for Water Quality Management) at the June TC meeting. EPSC noted the need for clarification in several sections of the Resolution and will send a letter to the Mayor/TC with recommendations on the water quality testing process (type and frequency) in compliance with state regulations. A work session was scheduled to prepare the recommendations.

A modest amount of the remaining FY20 EPSC budgeted funds will be used to purchase a supply of face masks for Town employees and for visitors to Town Hall who do not bring their own masks. EPSC will explore options to acquire COVID19 signage for Town parks and other public spaces which clearly communicate social distancing, face mask requirements, and other rules/best practices to prevent the COVID19 spread in public spaces. The Committee discussed the potential purchase of NARCAN for the Town Office's medical kit if the drug can be safely stored and be easily accessed.

The committee considered its potential role in supporting Town communication initiatives such as emergency communication processes and Town website content (e.g., COVID information). EPSC is willing to collaborate with the Communications Committee on these issues but needs guidance from the Mayor/TC on respective communication roles and responsibilities of each Committee.

The next EPSC virtual meeting will be on Thursday, July 23, 2020 at 7:30 PM.

### **MAPLE LAKE – Pat Klein**

The Committee met on June 18<sup>th</sup> via Zoom and focused on the process for re-opening Maple Lake in compliance with MC Phase 2 Orders during the COVID19 pandemic period. The Lake was scheduled to re-open on June 19<sup>th</sup> and will close around Labor Day.

Opening guidelines include: limiting the Lake area occupancy number to a maximum of 30 people, to include a maximum of 25 swimmers per life guard at any time; Lake guards will manage occupancy and adherence to use of face masks, hand sanitizers, other safety practices. The dock and swim ladder are roped off, picnic tables stacked, toy bin and tether-ball pole removed to prevent usage. Swim lessons are cancelled and lake party permits will not be issued.

Recent water quality testing conducted in May (pre-opening) reported repeated elevated levels of Enterococcus bacteria as indicators of contaminated water quality. Repeated samples tested on June 15 reported Enterococcus had returned to acceptable levels. Another water quality test was scheduled on June 22. The Committee decided to conduct biweekly water quality testing for the remainder of the Lake season.

The next virtual Committee meeting is scheduled on July 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM.

### **FORESTRY & BEAUTIFICATION (Including Memorials) – Gray Yachup**

The Forestry and Beautification Committee held a virtual meeting on June 10<sup>th</sup> to introduce the new liaison and review fall planting.

At the meeting, the committee introduced the new liaison and asked him any questions that they had, and vice versa. They also reviewed the last of the planting for the spring and had a discussion on fall planting. It was also decided that Jay would be giving an F&B tour to the liaison and other interested members of the committee when COVID allowed for it to be carried out safely.

### **ROADS & WALKWAYS – Gray Yachup**

Currently working with Stormwater Management to assess potential areas of mitigation and improvement for drainage in town, especially in the following key areas:

- The intersection of Center Street and Hickory
- The intersection of Chestnut Road and Oak Street
- The intersection of Center Street and Maple Avenue
- Cherry Avenue
- Acorn Lane
- Intersection of Maple Road and Center Street

After more discussion with all parties involved, there will be a list created of potential short-term and long-term projects.

### **WASHINGTON GROVE MEADOW CONSERVATION PARK – Gray Yachup**

Nothing to report.

### **SHADY GROVE CROSSING – Gray Yachup**

Nothing to report.

**PLAYGROUNDS – Gray Yachup**  
Nothing to report.