

# Town Council Reports for June 2022 Council Meeting

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## **Border Committee**

### **Eva Patrone**

Scheduled to meet on June 9. Agenda items are:

- Discussion of possible name change to Gateway Committee
- Strategic Plan/Vision updates
- Welcome sign locations: Placement of remaining 2 signs
- Grove Ave. to Marc access Update
- Commercial Corner News
- West Woods brush clearing
- Center and Oak Streets at WGL – improvements
- Street and Walkway signage

## **Conservation Meadow**

### **Dave Cosson**

The Montgomery Parks Maintenance Leader I met with last month, as described in my May 18<sup>th</sup> email, reports that preparatory work is continuing the items we discussed, and he expects work to begin on site in the near future.

## **Contracts**

### **Dave Cosson**

New rates have been set for Potomac Disposal.

## **Dog Park Committee**

### **Christine Dibble**

Nothing to report this month.

## **Emergency Preparedness and Safety Committee (EPSC)**

### **Gray Yachup**

EPSC is currently in the discussion and preliminary exploration phase for several potential events they would like to hold regarding Fire Safety and Cyber Awareness.

## Forestry & Beautification Committee

### Barbara Raimondo

F&B reviewed the spring tree planting at our last meeting. The new 11 new Stadler trees on Grove Ave/Circle all look happy. We have notified Stadler that the pink dogwood installed in front of 207 Grove Avenue has died. It will be replaced in the fall. Of the eleven hickory trees planted this spring, two appear to be dead. Three of the four hickories planted in the East woods are alive. So far, twelve of the fifteen trees delivered have survived. We consider this acceptable as we paid for ten trees. If less than ten survive, we have been promised replacements.

On May 27 Forestry and Beautification sponsored a work day along Railroad Street between Grove Road and Grove Avenue. Our goal was to widen the path from Grove Avenue to the bus stop and from there on to Grove Avenue improving the passage width and pedestrian safety. Two members of the Border Committee came and contributed tremendous energy and enthusiasm. In addition, preparatory work was done by one F&B member to clear overhanging vegetation on Grove Avenue between Railroad St and Brown St. The final result makes this important entrance area much friendlier and easy to use.



The Forestry and Beautification Committee will be on hiatus until September. Our next meeting will be at 7:30pm on Wednesday September 14.

## Historic Preservation Commission

### Darrell Anderson

The HPC held a virtual meeting on May 17, 2022. The next meeting will be held on June 21, 2022, at 7:30 pm on Zoom.

No permits have been submitted for review by the HPC. The HPC will jointly meet with the Planning Commission on June 15 to begin discussions of ordinances regarding preservation, demolition, mansionization, and flexible zoning in the R2 zone.

Corrections to the architectural survey were solicited in the bulletin and on the listserv. Eleven people responded and the work is progressing.

The HPC will work with Susan Van Nostrand and Freda Temple to transition sign-making materials to the HPC.

## Lake Committee

### Gray Yachup

*Lifeguards:* Currently three lifeguards are employed for lake duties this summer: Cam Clifford, Bella Gilmore, and Maisie Scott (part time). Pay rates have been increased to \$17 to compensate for increased hours and to make it competitive with other lifeguarding opportunities.

*Maintenance:* The outer perimeter fence has been repaired, the dock sealed, and the boards replaced. Picnic tables are in progress of being fixed, and the COVID sign needs updating.

*Wildlife:* Goose eggs have been oiled and removed, no signs of geese.

*RASEC:* All relevant signage has been translated and posted. Current efforts with RASEC are to review documentation for appropriate wording and to review de-escalation training for lifeguards.

## Lighting Committee

### Barbara Raimondo

*Additional Bollard Lights for McCathran Hall:* The two walkway bollard lights for McCathran Hall that were approved by the Town Council, The Historical Preservation Commission, and the Maryland Historical Trust have been received. There will be five total approved new lights.

*County and Municipal Street Light Investment Act– SB 0376 (Lee). HB 1083 (Carr):* TWG Lighting Committee and Mayor supported the County and Municipal Street Light Investment Act legislation. This bill was able to further raise awareness about the status of Maryland streetlights. Pepco appears to be on notice that they have not cooperated with the 2007 law that gave Maryland Municipalities who wish to

purchase their lights the right to do so. Currently, Pepco has stalled all previous attempts by Maryland Municipalities to purchase and maintain their own streetlights, although Montgomery County owns about 50% of its lights.

*New Pepco Tariff and Webinar by Delegate Al Carr, Thursday May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022:* Delegate Al Carr alerted us that Pepco had filed a new tariff that affects municipal ownership of lights. There was a webinar to strategize how to go forward in promoting the ability of Maryland municipalities to purchase their streetlights.

In response to Pepco's new tariff, TWG lighting committee worked together with Mayor John Compton to file comments with the MD PSC. Our comments noted failures of the proposed tariff changes to specify charges and conditions but expressed both optimism for continuation of the cooperation we have had with Pepco, along with concern for the lack of progress that Pepco has shown in allowing Maryland municipalities to negotiate the purchase of their streetlights.

The Maryland Public Service Commission administrative meeting to discuss the revised Pepco streetlights has now been moved (for the second time) to June 29<sup>th</sup> where its number 10 on the agenda.

Chair Virginia Quesada and member Dave Cosson met with a representative from Tanko, Alex Wurzel, who wants to be hired as a consultant. He will submit a proposal to the Town.

*Alternative Lighting Technology – Research by Anne Vincent:* Anne reported that though battery operated streetlights were improving, the technology was not yet adequate for our needs. Since there is a 50 foot right away on the walkways, if we were to successfully purchase our lights from Pepco we could look at a lot of alternative lighting from solar to low voltage on our walkways. There was some discussion of putting solar panels on the Salt Barns as a way to increase our solar energy footprint.

*Dark Sky Compliance:* There was interest on part of the TWG lighting committee in educating Town residents about Dark sky issues. Going forward in the bulletin we will try to research and recommend lighting products that are dark sky compliant. A link to the Chautauqua Dark Sky Initiative video was provided in the June 2022, Town Bulletin.

## **Maintenance**

### **Darrell Anderson**

In the first full month of groundskeeping maintenance, the contractor regularly mowed, string trimmed, picked up sticks and debris, and responded to requests from the Town to mow areas missed during regular mowing. They responded to residents' requests to the Town office to trim and mow on Town property adjacent to their residence. The contractor was very responsive and took care of these requests within a day or two.

Other tasks completed included preparing the clay tennis courts for the Memorial Day opening and working with F&B to water newly-planted trees.

## **Maryland Municipal League**

### **Darrell Anderson**

The MML held a virtual meeting on May 19, 2022, at 6:30 pm. Aside from the June 13 – 16 MML conference in Ocean City, the MML will not meet again until September.

Much of the meeting focused on the agenda and schedule for the June conference.

The MMLMC elected new officers and approved by-law changes.

A meeting was scheduled for May 24 with the County Executive staff to discuss COVID coordination in light of increased cases.

MC and PG Councils wrote letters to PEPCO and it was suggested that each municipality write to PEPCO regarding the tariff, especially concerning lighting issues.

## **McCathran Hall**

### **Barbara Raimondo**

We are looking into a necessary repair of the sprinkler system. Guardian has submitted a proposal for \$1,718. We are in discussion with Mayor and Town Clerk about next steps.

## **Montgomery Municipal Cable**

### **Gray Yachup**

No new reports from MMC this month.

## **Planning Commission**

### **Christine Dibble**

Nothing to report this month.

## **Racial and Social Equity Committee (RASEC)**

### **Barbara Raimondo**

There was no meeting in May.

Washington Grove/RASEC and Emory Grove and WG United Methodist Churches and the Montgomery County Racial Justice Coalition sponsored a walk around sites of historical significance in Washington Grove and Emory Grove, highlighting issues of racism and discrimination. The walk attracted approximately 30 residents from WG and 30 residents from EG.

Reverend Tim Warner of Emory Grove will do a virtual presentation on the history of Emory Grove and plans on re-building the Emory Grove community which was decimated by urban renewal on June 30 (postponed from April).

Inclusivity survey results have been collected and are now being analyzed.

A speaker series on accessory dwelling units (ADUs) is being planned.

We are continuing to improve RASEC web page by updating documents and creating better access.

We are beginning to work on establishing a domain-based mailbox for RASEC for smoother event registrations and communications.

We are continuing to work on Town on an anti-racist statement.

We are working on process to eliminate restrictive covenants from deeds. The Town Council approved next steps.

## Recreation Committee

### Eva Patrone

Held meetings on June 3 and June 8; has another meeting scheduled for June 13.

Trying to organize music weekend. Right now, the events are:

- **Friday June 24 at 7:30pm – sing-along** at the lake with Italian Ice and custard
- **Saturday June 25 at 10am – children’s recital** at the hall
  - Renee is having some trouble finding kids to perform, but Em’s kids will perform and possibly she will find others. Renee will send another email out
- **Saturday June 25 at 6pm – band** at the gazebo
  - Having trouble finding a band to perform. Possibly a band that Tami knows. If we can’t get a band, there was some talk of canceling the Friday sing-along and doing it on Saturday instead of a band
- **Sunday June 26 at 10:30am – Jazz Breakfast** at the gazebo
  - The jazz trio is down to only 2, but the jazz band will try to find a third musician
  - Waiting to find out how much the band will cost before deciding how much to spend on bagels/donuts

## Recreational Facilities (Woodward Park, Playground and Tennis Courts)

### Eva Patrone

- Replacement swing has been ordered; Steve will install.
- Steve will replace the broken part on the wooden playhouse
- Eva is creating list of other small tasks for either Steve or the landscapers. On the list right now:
  - Oil the merry-go-round
  - Repaint the merry-go-round seats
  - More wood chips where needed

- Eva conducted an informal poll of residents with young children or grandchildren for improvements they'd like to see at the park. Suggestions included:
  - More trees to shade equipment in sunny weather
  - A volleyball/badminton net
  - Possible to install a trash can?
  - Possible to give residents access to the bathroom in the maintenance shed?

## **Roads and Walkways**

### **Gray Yachup**

The new sign for the Woman's Club/Miller Drive parking is pending fabrication. Bids are in for the new road projects. Will be discussed next TC meeting.

Several graveling/seeding projects are pending completion. We will be messaging requesting Town residents and discussing at TC meetings when applicable.

We are continuing to work on creating a standardized process for requesting/approving projects like speed bumps, road repairs, or other similar maintenance projects.

## **Shady Grove Crossing**

### **Barbara Raimondo**

Nothing to report this month.

## **Stormwater Management**

### **Gray Yachup**

Nothing to report this month.

## **Sustainability Committee**

### **Dave Cosson**

The Sustainability Committee met on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and June 7<sup>th</sup> by Zoom and discussed the following:

**Earth Day Follow-Up.** The Committee considered the event successful, with at least 80 attendees. Vendors were pleased with the sign-ups for alternative energy suppliers. A recommendation to the Town is being prepared with regard to choice of electric suppliers for the Town facilities.

**Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.** Meetings with Pepco, including an onsite meeting, have continued. The Committee reviewed a Pepco site drawing. The next step will be submission of the plan for a Public Ways and Property Permit.

**Sustainable Maryland.** The Chair of the Green Team subcommittee reviewed the relevant actions at its May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting and the ongoing efforts to qualify for Sustainable Maryland certification. He noted: the extensive communications to the Town from the Committee as reflected on the Town website, Grove Bulletin and pamphlets; the successful Earth Day and Arbor Day Town functions; residents' subscription to alternative energy suppliers, and the efforts to establish a community garden. An inquiry will be made to the University of Maryland as to the availability of a qualified graduate student who could assist with town carbon footprints.

**Renewable Electricity Options.** A draft paper examining municipal options is being reviewed and will be forwarded to the Council upon completion. Discussions with potential vendors and consultants continue.

The County planning involving a possible extension of Amity Drive through the lower meadow (Piedmont Park) to Crabbs Branch Way was discussed. If the road and bike path are ultimately located on the southern end of the park, there could be enough room left for a viable solar field which would serve the Town.

**Food Security.** Most of the discussion involved a proposal to create a "community garden" which would provide instruction to volunteers in gardening practices and food for donation to food banks serving the needy. The proposed location, inside

the tennis court fences next to the shed, was selected as the only location in town with full sun, existing deer proof fencing, and convenient water.

The Committee approved a motion that it sponsor the garden and recommend approval to the Town Council. A detailed proposal will be forwarded to the Council. The Committee requests that the proposed garden be added to the Council Agenda for June 13<sup>th</sup> as an information item and also agreed that if requested by the Council, it would present the concept to the Town residents at a public meeting.

**Communications.** The Committee reviewed its communication plan including monthly topics for inclusion in the Town Bulletin through the end of the year.

**Next Meeting: July 5<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm.**

## **Website and Communications**

### **Christine Dibble**

Nothing to report this month.

## **Woods Committee**

### **Dave Cosson**

The Woods Committee met on May 2nd and June 6th by Zoom and discussed the following:

**East Woods Activities.** Stadler Nursery planted two white dogwoods along the Dogwood Trail and five American Hollies along the Frankland Tail. The pink dogwoods planted by the Welcome sign on the corner of Daylily Lane and Washington Grove Lane did not survive and will be replaced at no cost by Stadler.

The Committee continued its discussion of rerouting the excessively wet northeast end of Maple Trail to intersect at a higher point with the McCauley trail to mitigate further erosion of that trail section. The Committee plans to extend the brown gravel along the intersection of Maple Ave and Frankland trails to promote better

drainage in the area. The new Bradfield Crossing trail through a greenbrier pathway is very wet. The Committee is considering options to improve this trail section.

Several trees and large tree limbs fell in the East Woods during a rainstorm over Memorial Day weekend. One large oak tree fell at the entrance gate to the Maintenance Building damaging the metal gate and pulling down power lines. Pepco had their tree service contractor clear the driveway entrance so it could restore the power lines. A locust tree was uprooted near Grove Road and fell across the protective boxed fencing of a recently planted tree, sparing the tree. A large tree limb fell across the Challstrom trail near Boundary Street (Silver Dollar Court) trail entrance. The locust tree and tree limb will be removed by Laws tree service.

Poultry carcasses were illegally dumped in the East Woods along the Challstrom trail over the Memorial Day weekend. The dead chickens and doves appear to have been slaughtered for ritual reasons without being cooked and consumed. The Woods Committee co-chair reported this incident to the Mayor and Town Clerk.

**Stormwater Management.** The Committee is awaiting a response from Frank Dawson at MC DEP to the Mayor's letter requesting assistance with stormwater run-off the cement culvert along the Towne Crest boundary.

The Committee is working to develop West Woods SWM mitigation proposals to solicit contractor bids using available ARPA and Maryland Bond funds. The Committee discussed how to structure an RFP that would result in an economically feasible proposal to develop action plans to mitigate stormwater erosion problems in the West Woods. The co-chairs reflected on previous discussions and site visit last year by Soltesz civil engineering firm when they were bidding on Montgomery County funding proposal.

**Deer Management Program.** A letter to MC Park and Planning is being drafted for the Mayor's signature stating that the Town supports an expansion of our Deer Management program to include the Conservation Meadow and Piedmont Crossing Park for the upcoming deer hunt season.

**Next Meeting:** Friday, July 1st, 7:30 pm (to accommodate the Independence Day holiday).