

Town Council Reports for February 2023 Council Meeting

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Conservation Meadow

Dave Cosson

There is cut in the fence near the southeast corner of the trail in the Lower Meadow (Piedmont Crossing Local Park) which is allowing deer to access the MD 200 exit ramp. The cut has been reported to State highway authorities; however, no repair has yet been made.

Contracts

Dave Cosson

Landscaping/Maintenance: The draft RFP for Landscaping/Maintenance is ready for consideration.

Dog Park Committee

Christine Dibble

Nothing to report this month.

Emergency Preparedness and Safety Committee (EPSC)

Sylvie Favret

No report this month.

Forestry & Beautification Committee

Barbara Raimondo

The F&B Committee has arranged a new contract for pruning of 15 young trees planted in the past 2-10 years. The 2006 Urban Forest Management Plan says that "The town's trees should be pruned as needed to establish and maintain sound branching patterns and form. This is especially important for young trees, as they are developing the branching patterns that the town will be living with and managing far into the future."

The trees are marked with yellow and orange tape, some along Grove Road and the remainder in the Woodward Park playground area. The work will be done in February/March while the trees are still dormant.

Our next F&B Committee meeting will be on Wednesday March 8.

Gateway Committee

Eva Patrone

- There is still graffiti at the MARC train station, so, in addition to filling out an online form, Peter Nagrod left a phone message with someone at MTA. Waiting to hear back.

- The Gateway Committee held a meeting via Zoom on January 12 at 7:30pm. Highlights of the meeting include:
 - Sign City reduced the fee for updating welcome signs to \$1500 for all 3 signs. Steve and Peter will install the new panels.
 - Four locations along Washington Grove Lane were approved by the committee for identity fencing:
 1. a corner piece by Sharon's house,
 2. by the bus stop next to the entrance to the lake,
 3. across from John Cohen's house,
 4. across from the Chestnut Ave identity fence.
 - A site visit from the DOT took place in January to address the ditches on Washington Grove Lane that need guardrails.
 - Peter suggested that everyone brainstorm ideas for what to do about trash along Washington Grove Lane and Railroad Street.
 - Bollards were installed at the end of Center and Oak Streets to make it clear that they are walkways, not roadways.
 - A welcome sign will be installed on Ridge Road between Washington Grove and Shady Grove Crossing.
 - RJ will put dirt and gravel down at 4th Ave and RJ will maintain it. It will be a "real" Washington Grove walkway.
 - Grove Ave is more complicated because of worries about water run-off. Gravel and dirt will be put down, and RJ will work on straightening out the path. There may need to be some water mitigation. It will also be maintained as a walkway.
 - The Gateway Committee wants to be kept informed about the shared use path project now being considered by Gaithersburg that would connect the Gaithersburg MARC station with the path that will begin at the southeastern end of Brown Street and lead to the Shady Grove Metro. Eva, Peter, and Georgette attended the presentation on Jan. 25 and plan to report back to the committee.

Historic Preservation Commission

Rob Gilmore

On Tuesday, January 17, the Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) met by Zoom, starting at 7:30 p.m. and adjourning approximately 1.5 hours later. After reviewing and approving the agenda and minutes from the prior meeting, the HPC first discussed the application by the owners of 3 Daylily Lane for approval of a single-car addition to the existing attached two-car garage. The committee then discussed planning for the Town's 150 Year Anniversary

Celebration, and there was discussion about the events and commemorations being contemplated as part of that Celebration. Discussion turned to the historical fence and gate that surrounded Washington Grove from approximately 1891–1910, and the idea of a memorial that acknowledges and educates the troubling racist provenance of the fence and gate. After that, there was discussion of the RASEC resolution and its importance, as well as considerations concerning the impact on current residents whose relatives were residents and elected officials of the town in the past while the overtly racist practices occurred. In addition, there was discussion of corrections and comments to the town’s architectural survey.

Lake Committee

Sylvie Favret

No report this month.

Lighting Committee

Barbara Raimondo

Responses to Pepco’s sales & pole attachment agreements for municipal streetlight ownership: Virginia and Dave Cosson described the process in creating a redline response. This redline response was created under the leadership of attorney Suellen Ferguson along with help from our lighting consultant, George Woodbury from Lightsmart and our Town Councilor, Dave Cosson. Additionally, we shared responses from various municipalities that were sent to Maryland Public Service Commission.

Meeting with Pepco & MD PSC in Baltimore on 1/25/23: On January 25, 2023, Suellen Ferguson, George Woodbury, Virginia Quesada and Andy Leon Hardy testified to the Maryland Public Service Commission (MD PSC) in Baltimore, MD. We were testifying on the status of the discussions between Pepco and interested Maryland municipalities on creating a viable path for municipal streetlight ownership.

Going forward, this February, a smaller group of decision makers from both Pepco and the interested municipalities will be meeting to try to get closer on some agreements on the process of municipal light ownership. The MD PSC is expecting a filing from this smaller group on April 7th, 2023.

Lighting Committee Budget for 2023: So far, Chevy Chase View has been paying all of Suellen’s costs. TWG has been paying George Woodbury’s expenses only, while he has donated an extraordinary amount of time and invaluable expertise!

The Committee agreed that in the budget we should commit to continue to pay for George’s expenses but increase that consulting budget item and that we should also commit to help with Suellen’s cost for creating this filing and probably one hearing. But nobody wants an open checkbook for this. The Town is small and we are already paying for George’s expenses.

Maintenance

John Compton

Nothing to report.

Maryland Municipal League

Barbara Raimondo

MML has informed us of its support for HB 182/SB 335, the covenants bill.

McCathran Hall

John Compton

Last fall a routine test of the Hall sprinkler system revealed a leak from a pipe in the ceiling of the octagon when the system was charged with water. A section of heavy iron pipe must be replaced. The option of carrying pipe from a ceiling access panel into place across the 2"x4" wood ceiling supports will require installation of expensive scaffolding to support the weight of men and pipe. The alternative of opening the ceiling below the site of the leak and using scaffolding for men and pipe to access the site is being explored.

Montgomery Municipal Cable

Sylvie Favret

No report.

Planning Commission

Christine Dibble

- New permit application for garage at 3 Daylily Lane. The PC approved this application, contingent on receiving a corrected site plan sheet that shows the 25-foot front setback.
- The PC sent to the TC the requested background information for the Planning Commission opinion of December 7, 2022 re: the Sale of Town Land
- The PC continued discussions about possible regulations for ADUs, owner-occupied rentals and non-owner-occupied rentals.

Racial and Social Equity Committee (RASEC)

Barbara Raimondo

Anti-Racism Resolution: This resolution will be introduced at the February 13 Town Council meeting. It will be shared with Town residents, and residents will be encouraged to share their views with Town Councilors. It may be beneficial for residents to have the opportunity to participate in the educational events, particularly the Forum described below prior to the community hearing and the TC vote.

Educational Programs: The following two events are scheduled to take place over the next few months:

Film and Discussion Project: “Deconstructing Karen” is a documentary film about two nonwhite facilitators who invite white women to dinner to discuss race. Chazz and Paula have planned three virtual sessions. The first session will be held on February 25, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. Women from WG and EG will be invited to view the film and discuss it.

Are We Segregated by Design? Forum: This forum will take place on March 25, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Attendees and speakers may choose to attend in-person at McCathran Hall or virtually. The topic is discriminatory housing policies and practices and the impact on families and communities today. There will be a short film and discussion followed by expert speakers and Q&A.

Covenants: Delegates Reznik and Lopez and Senator King have introduced HB 182/SB 335, a bill that would permit municipalities to unilaterally remove restrictive covenants from deeds. The Maryland Municipal League is in support. Through Charlie Challstrom, the Town sent a detailed letter in strong support (see separate document). The House bill hearing was February 7 and the Senate hearing is scheduled for February 16.

Communications: The RASEC domain-based email is rasec@washingtongrovermd.org is up and running.

Town Inclusivity: The Survey data analysts will present some findings at the February RASEC meeting.

Housing Workgroup/Planning Commission issues related to RASEC: At the January 4 Planning Commission (PC) Meeting the discussion regarding the licensing of room rentals continued. The licensure of room rentals and ADU’s, if the Town chooses to allow them, offer an opportunity for economic diversity and possibly other diversity.

At the last PC meeting, they discussed that WG already has a list of Montgomery County ordinances that the Town has adopted. Montgomery County regulates those ordinances. The rental licensing can be added to that list.

Now there is a question of whether the county only regulates the rentals of owner-occupied properties or properties not owner-occupied. Georgette and Paula will research the county regulations and talk to county people for clarification. We may see if county representatives can offer advice especially since they expressed the county’s interest in removing barriers to increase diverse housing stock.

Storytelling Project: Through this program, people from WG and neighboring communities are invited to share stories around a theme. This would be a way to bond and learn about each other. The first event was held January 25 and people told stories around the theme of food and culture.

The stories were varied, and they all seemed to have an element of humor. The other two sessions will occur in June and October.

150th Anniversary: The WG 150-year anniversary planning group is planning an activity per month starting in March to celebrate. There will be a culminating large event in August. RASEC was asked to invite Emory Grove for a walk of WG and a social gathering in June. A workgroup will be formed to plan and organize the activity.

Recreation Committee

Eva Patrone

- Emily Cavey will be stepping down as head of the Rec Committee after the Music Weekend in June. The committee will have a meeting in March to discuss who will take Emily's place and to make plans for upcoming events.
- Eva has been talking to various members of the Rec Committee about their budget for the new fiscal year. Peter Nagrod would like a new event added to the Rec budget: a Circle Fest summer gathering. Previously this has been a more informal party, but he hopes for it to become a town-sponsored event.
- Eva is working to reinstate weekly yoga at McCathran Hall. The former instructor, Terry Strother, has stepped down.
 - Tom Land, though he is not a certified instructor, has been practicing for 20+ years and has offered to teach a free weekly "Chair and Pillow" yoga class for those interested.
 - Eva would like to find a certified yoga instructor to teach an all-levels Hatha or Slow Flow class for those who are not yet at the Chair Yoga stage. The cost for this class would likely be \$10-\$15 a class.
 - Alison Faupel knows a certified instructor who may be interested, and Alison has offered to teach a kids yoga class if there's interest.
 - Eva's thoughts are to pursue regular yoga and perhaps Chair and Pillow yoga for now, and then later think about kid yoga.

Recreational Facilities (Woodward Park, Playground and Tennis Courts)

Eva Patrone

In thinking about the Capital Improvement funds, Eva has been requesting ideas from residents about larger improvements to the playground area of Woodward Park. Some suggestions:

- Address drainage issues to make the park less muddy

- Related: Put wood chips under the picnic tables (create a wood-chip section for the picnic tables) because currently they are sitting on patches of red clay mud
- Related: Put down fertilizer and grass seed since more grass might mean less mud.
- Remove the old merry-go-round (despite being oiled, it's extremely difficult to push) and replace it with a new piece of equipment.
- Don't remove the old merry-go-round, but do buy a new piece of equipment.
- Buy some pieces of adult exercise equipment, similar to those recently installed in some DC parks.

Roads and Walkways

Sylvie Favret

No report.

Shady Grove Crossing

Barbara Raimondo

No report this month.

Stormwater Management

Sylvie Favret

No report.

Sustainability Committee

Dave Cosson

The Sustainability Committee met on February 7th and discussed the following:

150th Anniversary/Earth Day. The Committee began planning for Earth Day, April 22nd. A composting demonstration was discussed, including the potential availability of County provided compost containers. The County is reported to be testing rodent-proof composters, which would allow composting food scraps as well as garden materials. Also discussed was the potential of showing appropriate films, such as *No Impact Man*, along with an environmentally-friendly potluck meal. Members will investigate these ideas further and have definitive proposals by the March meeting.

Landscape Maintenance RFP. The Committee believes that the RFP should encourage the use, wherever possible, of electrical rather than gas powered landscape tools, recognizing that some

electric powered tools are more capable of use by landscapers than others. The distribution of the RFP should include landscapers known to use electric tools. Proposed wording was provided.

Budget. Following discussion, the Committee agreed on a proposed budget total of \$6,000 that would include \$4,000 for a grant writer, \$200 for energy audits, and funds for the community garden.

Climate Action Plan. Last year's plan was reviewed, identifying actions that were completed and those that should be ongoing. As the Town's baseline emissions are established, the next step is a mitigation plan to reduce the outflow of carbon. Identifying and praising residents that have made substantial reductions at the Annual Town Meeting was discussed.

ICLEI Data. A committee member provided and discussed analysis and quantification of the various sources of carbon emissions generated by Town residents. The analysis recognizes the total emissions are offset by the carbon sequestration of the Town's forest, but this was estimated at only 4.2%. The data show that the largest reductions can be achieved by conversion of home heating, cooking appliances, and vehicles to electricity and reduction in meat consumption.

Website and Communications

Christine Dibble

New content:

- Agendas and minutes for Council, HPC, Planning Commission; Council Reports
- Home page features:
 - Submit info for directory
 - Summer jobs at Maple Lake
 - Upcoming events of note
 - Sustainability tips and features

Woods Committee

Dave Cosson

The Woods Committee met on February 6th by Zoom and discussed the following:

Deer Management. Hunting Season ended January 31st, with BHFFD reporting a total of eight deer harvested. The Committee will prepare a thank you letter for the Mayor's signature.

Trail Maintenance and Repairs. At the Committee's request RJ Landscaping provided an estimate for replacing the bridge on the Cherry Trail of \$1,075. The Committee concluded the price was reasonable and will ask the Mayor for authority to go ahead.

Some young holly trees that were staked but not protected by plastic mesh fencing have been severely browsed by deer. The Committee plans to erect protective fencing and will need to purchase supplies.

FY '24 Budget. The Committee reviewed its current budget and expenditures and discussed expected expenses in the upcoming fiscal year. Restoration of Whetstone Spring was proposed as a part of the activities being planned to celebrate the Town's 150th anniversary. RJ Landscaping provided an estimate of \$2,600. There was also discussion of improvements, perhaps including fencing, to Maple Spring. A budget total of \$50,000 will be submitted.

Stormwater Mitigation RFP. Bids are due February 10 and will be opened at the Town Council Meeting on the 13th. As two new residents of Town attended the meeting, it was noted that the RFP study area includes portion of the residential areas of Town where they could be affected by flooding.