

Town Council Reports for May 2023 Council Meeting

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Conservation Meadow

Dave Cosson

An email regarding the cut in the fence separating the lower meadow from the I-370 ramp to the state Department of Transportation was referred to the State Highway Administration. No reply has been received.

Contracts

Dave Cosson

The stormwater contract has been sent to Soltesz for signature.

Dog Park Committee

Christine Dibble

Nothing to report this month.

Emergency Preparedness and Safety Committee (EPSC)

Sylvie Favret

The EPSC met on April 27th and discussed the following:

County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Committee Chairman will attend the May 5 County meeting and will provide links to the Committee members so they can attend virtually.

The County has published a survey on climate change issues, which the Committee will make available for residents to complete. The County will be asked for summaries of responses from Town residents.

RR Street Culvert. The County has nearly completed work installing a new cement culvert under Railroad Street which will drain storm water from Morgan Park.

Maple Lake Vandalism. The recent incident in which vandals removed trail sign posts from the West Woods and apparently used them to scale the gate into the lake was discussed. Discussion included questions on status of video surveillance cameras and need to repair barbed wire at several places along top of the lake.

Rail Safety. The Committee plans future inquiries into whether any hazardous materials are being transported on the Brunswick Line through the County and what risks a derailment into Robert's Oxygen would pose.

Fire Education. The Committee will inquire as to the availability of Fire Department education presentations at future Town events such as the Women's Club coffees.

Forestry & Beautification Committee

Barbara Raimondo

The 13 trees chosen by our two F&B subgroups were installed on Monday April 10. These include an eight-foot "Greenleaf" American holly, a two-inch caliper redbud, and a two-inch "Cherokee Princess" dogwood on Center Street. On Chestnut Avenue we added a two-inch white swamp oak, a twelve-foot three-stem riverbirch, a two-inch black gum "Wildfire", a three-inch "October Glory" maple, a 2.5-inch nutall oak, a two-inch redbud "Forest Pansy", a six-foot loblolly pine, a two-inch scarlet oak, and a 2.5-inch tulip poplar. On Grove Avenue near Second Avenue, we placed an eight-foot "Cherokee Brave" dogwood. A member of the F&B Committee was present to monitor installation of all trees. We plan to continue filling in the trees on the south end of Chestnut Avenue in the fall.

The watering tapes have been removed from the older trees and we made sure that all trees installed in Fall of 2022 plus all the new trees from this spring had new pink tapes on them. This allows RJ Landscaping to easily identify which trees to water. Fresh maps were prepared for both sets of trees to aid in finding the ones to be watered. The maps were sent to Jim Quinn at RJ Landscaping as well as delivering physical copies for the fellow assigned to the watering detail. Steve Werts has thoroughly briefed this RJ Landscaping employee on how to use the watering wagon and how to do the watering properly.

We continue to work with the Sustainability Committee on the plans for Doug Tallamy's talk on May 31. We look forward to his suggestions for coping with our non-native invasives and deer over browse.

Since our spring planting was finished earlier than usual this year, our next meeting will be in late summer when we start plans for the fall tree installation. Our next F&B Committee meeting will be on Wednesday August 9.

Gateway Committee

Eva Patrone

A meeting was held via Zoom on April 20 at 7:30pm; next meeting will be May 11 at 7:30pm.

- Jon made a sign-up sheet to present at Earth Day potluck this weekend to get people involved in picking up trash on Washington Grove Lane.
- Tatiana Bell, owner of Commercial Corner, got a bid for \$2800 to get rid of dumpster. (Peter got a bid from RJ for \$3200.) Peter made a motion that the Gateway Committee request that the town pay \$2800 to Tatiana Bell for removal of the dumpster from Commercial Corner. Seconded by Patty, the proposal will be presented to the Town Council. Peter will talk with Charlie to see if there are any ordinances that need to be changed in order to put trash receptacles behind Commercial Corner.
- Peter is running for Council in May, so there will need to be a new Chair to Gateway.

- Some discussion about the Washington Grove Connector. For example, it seems the County is not going to make the very short connection between Ridge Road and Picea View Court, even though this was supposed to definitely happen. We have Welcome signs to put there, but we were waiting for the path to be put in.
- The culverts under Railroad Street are being repaired. This will hopefully stop some of the flooding in Morgan Park.

Historic Preservation Commission

Rob Gilmore

No report this month.

Lake Committee

Sylvie Favret

The Maple Lake Committee met on April 11 in the Council Room and via Zoom. This hybrid meeting was a success.

Lake cleanup took place the entire weekend of April 15 and 16 due to the rainy weather. Many participants helped on both days and made this event very successful.

Wildlife

- Seven goose eggs oiled on Sunday, April 2nd Geese have gone now!

Maintenance

- Outflow pipe cleared. Lake is draining for the cleanup – Thanks Bruce R., Bruce C., Andrzej, Hutch and Tom
- Fencing: Check for holes - Bruce C. & et.al.
- Barbed Wire: Schedule time to re-string barbed wire behind the shed.
- Dock: Water seal the one new board.
- Picnic Tables: Bruce & Tom will try to fix bent plastic planks.
- Video Cameras: Tom will install system early to get all three cameras working.
- Additional two umbrellas for lifeguards purchased at Woman's Club flea market

Pond Water Management (Tom)

- LakeSource LLC, Adam Gabor, treated twice the last week of March. They may use muck degrading bacteria.
- Water Testing Labs for H₂O testing for e. coli etc. monthly May thru August

Lifeguards (Tom)

- Start at \$17/hour. Jean Moyer working on bundling the on-board process (forms/etc.)
- We have four prospective lifeguards (Jude, Eli, Jack, Zach)

- Continue to advertise and hire more lifeguards and lake guards. Advertise on local bulletin boards - Tom
- Check out first aid kits - Tom
- Jean is switching to a new accounting system that will allow for phone/computer timesheets.

Swim Instructor (Sung)

- Start at \$20/hour. Coordinate with S.I.T.P. for schedules - Sung
- Advertise, find and hire swim instructor, ask anyone who goes to local pools or gyms

RASEC

- Continue monitoring possible need for training Lifeguards on de-escalation

Budget (Tom):

- Budget line for treatment and testing was reduced to reflect contracts with LakeSource and Water Testing Labs, in consultation with Jean Moyer and the Mayor

Administration

- Future meetings *2nd Tuesday of every month* through September.
- We will continue with HYBRID meetings, in-person in the Council Room & computer for Zoom people.

Lighting Committee

Barbara Raimondo

No report this month.

Maintenance

Mayor Compton

No report this month.

Maryland Municipal League

Rob Gilmore

The MML is planning its upcoming conference June 25-28.

McCathran Hall

Mayor Compton

No report this month.

Montgomery Municipal Cable

Sylvie Favret

No report this month.

Planning Commission

Christine Dibble

- Fence permit for 336 Ridge Road (Raphael/Rice) approved.
- The PC continues to review a four-page proposal from HPC re: preservation/ demolition ordinance plan. We discussed potentially modifying the process of reviewing applications for permits, and so-called “contingent reviews by the HPC.
- The PC made excellent progress at the May 3 meeting on planning the ADU process. We have determined who will write an initial draft of, and who will then edit, a document to be presented to the Council re: ADUs. We are hopeful that we will have this document to the Council in July.
- The PC asked Marc Hansen for information about how easy it is to modify the language in the ordinances re: granting variances, so that we can give homeowners more flexibility in meeting the requirements set forth in the ordinances. Marc responded that our power is significantly constrained by the Land Use article of the Maryland Code.

Racial and Social Equity Committee (RASEC)

Barbara Raimondo

Subcommittee/Workgroup Updates

Education:

Are We Segregated by Design Forum Debrief - Paula

The forum covered discriminatory housing policy at the national and local level and included a brief documentary, discussion, and three expert speakers. There was mostly positive feedback. However, tech issues at the Hall with the hybrid format (internet connection, audio, etc.) caused a lot of disruption. This will need to be addressed before attempting a hybrid event in the future (a town-wide issue, not just for RASEC).

Covenants - Charlie

Thus far, we have assisted with filing 12 restrictive covenant modifications for properties in Town, all done in response to requests/inquiries from the current owners of the property. There is work in progress for at least three more modifications to respond to requests received after the March 25 Forum.

Copies of the 12 filings are available from the State Archives website and also from the [Restrictive Covenants](#) folder of the online [Council Handbook](#), which is linked with the Town's website. Other related documents are also in that folder to support this Council-

approved project including updated [Project Procedures](#) and a [Report from Senator Nancy King](#) on legislation to streamline the process of remedying these unlawful covenants.

Film and Discussion Project –Chazz/Paula

Members of Washington Grove and Emory Grove communities are invited to discuss the documentary, Deconstructing Karen. There will be a women’s group discussion (June 10), a men’s group discussion (June 17), and a follow-up with all attendees (July 8). Documentary description: Activists inspire white women to confront themselves and to acknowledge their own racism and complicity in white supremacy, and the part they can play in tearing down systems of oppression.

Town Inclusivity:

Housing Workgroup

Planning Commission issues Related to RASEC

Paula will attend the next meeting and report back as they will be discussing ADUs.

Survey Workgroup - Chazz

The survey was designed to assess views on inclusivity and participation and engagement in town. It’s a very rich data source and the survey workgroup is working hard to process and visualize the data. One challenge is sharing insights on sensitive questions while maintaining anonymity. The Leadership Team will discuss next steps for data presentation and submit ideas to the RASEC membership for ratification. A later step may involve focus groups.

Neighboring Communities

Storytelling Project - Chazz

Chazz’s organization, Adventures with Wilson, provides a platform for storytelling similar to NPR’s the Moth. Storytelling is a trust-building opportunity for Washington Grove and Emory Grove members and helps us find common ground. Everyone has some medicine for someone else. The first storytelling event already took place on the theme of food and two are upcoming: freedom (June 15th 7-9pm), musical memories (October 19th 7-9pm).

Heritage Emory Grove – Dick

Urban renewal was extremely destructive to Emory Grove, leaving only the church and a water pump. Recently, however, there have been many encouraging community re-building activities. Emory Grove church has been buying nearby property for years and Pastor Warner, along with EG church and Habitat for Humanity, has active plans to rebuild and recreate the community. They have formed a board, Heritage Emory Grove, to help facilitate the process and, excitingly, they are now close to reaching 501(c) status (allowing them to accept charitable donations). There have also been efforts from local landscape architecture students to help design and landscape around Longview School. There will be opportunities for WG residents to participate in the future.

Council Updates Related to RASEC – Barbara

The anti-racist resolution was recently reviewed by the Town Council. They invited and received many written and oral comments. They have been walking through the resolution with a fine-

tooth comb to make sure it is clear and well-documented. A new version will be prepared by May 8th.

New Business:

Boundary Street

Lynn Mento brought forward a new project proposal: renaming Boundary Street. Boundary Street is heavily laden with racial connotation—historically, meaning to many people “stay out if you are black.” Lynn proposed that RASEC form a workgroup to evaluate the desire and process for changing the name.

Annual Town Meeting

We reviewed the list of accomplishments and goals to be presented at the annual town meeting. We decided to add the future goal re: renaming Boundary St to the list. Margie also noted re: expanding outreach that she could help make connections with other communities via the church.

Final Comments

We added a general agenda item for RASEC to provide input on the tech issues at the Hall.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- No May RASEC Meeting
- Saturday, May 13: Annual Town Meeting and Elections
- June 10, June 17, July 8: Deconstructing Karen Film Viewing and Discussions about Racism. More information closer to the dates.
- June 15 7:00pm-9:00pm: Virtual Storytelling- Theme: Freedom

Recreation Committee

Eva Patrone

- The Summer in the Parks planning committee has hired two excellent employees. Tali Kuperberg will be the Camp Director, and Max Mento will be Senior Counselor (and possibly Assistant Director). We are still looking to hire a junior counselor. Camper registration forms and staff/volunteer application forms are up on the town website. So far we have 10 registered campers.
- Weekly yoga continues in the Grove! Rachel Schwartz will continue offering a free yoga class on Tuesday evenings from 6-7pm in McCathran Hall. Class is free for residents and \$10 for non-residents (cash only). Donations are welcome. Yoga is sponsored by the Rec Committee (POC: Eva Patrone).
- The Rec Committee held a meeting via Zoom on Wednesday, April 26 at 7pm. The next Meeting will be May 17 at 7pm.
- Plans for music weekend are under way. The events will be:

- Friday, June 23 (evening): sing-along at the lake
 - Saturday, June 24 (evening): band at the gazebo
 - Sunday, June 25 (morning): jazz breakfast at the gazebo
 - Friday, July 14 (evening): youth performance at McCathran Hall
- The Rec Committee is also planning a family event on July 8. Details to come.

Recreational Facilities (Woodward Park, Playground and Tennis Courts)

Eva Patrone

Playground:

RJ will move forward with two projects at the playground:

- creating a wood-timber-surrounded wood-chip area under the picnic tables
- re-grading some of the low-lying spots in the playground area by bringing in more dirt and reseeding the grass

Work should begin on these projects May 8-9.

Community Garden Update:

Some of the salad greens were harvested. Since it was a small amount, instead of taking it to Manna, the harvest was used as a teaching opportunity and gardeners took the greens home to eat.

The crimson clover is blooming in the garden and will soon be cut down as a green mulch. Gardeners will soon be doing more harvesting and planting.

Roads and Walkways

Sylvie Favret

No report this month.

Shady Grove Crossing

Barbara Raimondo

No report this month.

Stormwater Management

Sylvie Favret

No report this month.

Sustainability Committee

Dave Cosson

The Sustainability Committee met on May 2 and discussed the following:

Earth Day Follow-Up. The EV Charge Station ribbon cutting was cancelled because of the weather and will be rescheduled, perhaps after the chargers have been energized. A few people attended the compost demonstration. Follow-up discussion is planned with the County as its rules are overly restrictive as to what can be in an open composter, such as coffee grounds. Councilman Glass may be of help. A follow-up is also planned with Utility Advisors as to its posting of links to alternative electric suppliers. The pot-luck was very successful and the slide show and film were well received.

Renewable Energy Follow-Up. The Maryland Legislature has made the Community Solar Program permanent. Montgomery County has not taken action to establish a county-wide program. Customer choice electric has only 5% penetration. The Committee is looking into further options for the municipal accounts.

Green Team. The Town's application for Sustainable Maryland certification is under final editing in preparation for filing in June. The application is expected to claim 200 points, while 150 are needed for certification.

Incentive Program. The Committee reviewed the proposal for a pilot Town funded incentive program to fund conversion from fossil fuel heating to heat pumps and purchase of electric vehicles. Alternative approaches and several comments were discussed. While residents could expect to reduce their energy consumption upon conversion in most cases; the objective of the program is to reduce Green House Gas emissions. While the Committee is willing to administer the program, it would do so in a manner that did not involve access to any resident's financial information. The Committee concluded that it would request to make presentations at the May 8th Town Council meeting and the May 13 Town Meeting, and request approval of the program and funding.

Website and Communications

Christine Dibble

New content:

- Agendas and minutes for Council, HPC, Planning Commission; Council Reports; Town Bulletin
- New pages:
 - Planning Commission Evaluations of Applications for Building Permits and Subdivision Plans
- New posts:
 - Earth Day
- Home page features/announcements:

- Election reminders
- Garden stroll and cottage tour
- CircleFest '23
- 150th Anniversary of the B&O Railroad Metropolitan Branch
- Elimination of PO box fees

Woods Committee

Dave Cosson

The Woods Committee met on May 1, 2023 by Zoom and discussed the following:

Dr. Tallamy Talk. Members were reminded that the talk by noted entomologist Dr. Doug Tallamy will be presented by Zoom on May 31st at 7:30 p.m. The talk is co-sponsored by the Woods Committee, Sustainability Committee, and Forest and Beautification Committee in recognition of Earth Day.

Arbor Day West Woods Event. On April 29th Committee members and other residents spent the morning removing various invasive, non-native plants from the area around Whetstone Spring in the West Woods. This removal is expected to allow replacement by desirable native species and will expedite the planned restoration of the spring area planned as part of the 150-year celebration.

Whetstone Spring Restoration. The Committee is working with RJ Landscaping to restore the immediate area around the spring by clearing debris and sediment and replacing the missing capstone. This work is intended to be completed in time for the Town's 150-year celebration in August.

Stormwater Mitigation Contract. The Council selected Soltesz LLC to analyze stormwater flow and prepare a mitigation plan. A contract has been sent to Soltesz and work is expected to begin shortly. The Woods Committee is working with members of the HPC to document any possible archaeological evidence. Representatives of the Committee and the HPC will participate in an initial walkthrough of the contract area. Residents of Daylily Lane will also be involved in describing the water flow from their street.

Tree Planting in the East Woods. The Committee has identified the locations for 13 new trees that will be planted in the East Woods on May 12. Varieties include redbud, dogwood, swamp white oak, white oak, and red oak. Arrangements will be made with RJ Landscaping and town volunteers to help water the trees.

Legacy Trees. The Committee, in coordination with the F&B Committee, has developed a proposed revision to the Town's Memorial Policy that will provide for planting of Legacy Trees in Town parks or woods preserves. Upon approval of the Council in each case, cremated ashes of Town residents would be mixed with the root ball of trees being planted. There will be no

memorial plaques. Memorial documentation will be recorded in a Memorial Book in the Town Office.

Invasive Species Control. The Town's contractor, Invasive Plant Control, has made a preliminary tour of the woods and expects to begin treating invasive plants, such as wisteria, Japanese knotweed, in June, to be finished before Summer in the Parks.