

Town Council Reports for June 2023 Council Meeting

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Conservation Meadow

Christine Dibble

Nothing to report this month.

Contracts

Rob Gilmore

Nothing to report this month.

Dog Park Committee

Mary Warfield

No meeting this month. We are scheduling a meeting ASAP to elect a new chair.

Emergency Preparedness and Safety Committee (EPSC)

Eva Patrone

The committee held a meeting via Zoom on May 25 at 7:30 pm. Highlights include:

- Agreed to put BBQ season safety for dogs in the June bulletin.
- Looked at information from the Montgomery County Hazard Mitigation planning meeting. They will finalize a draft this winter and send it out in 2024.
- Decided to work with Sustainability Committee to raise awareness about flooding and the Rainscapes program, which can pay for landscaping to mitigate flooding.
- Update on fire department outreach: the fire department will do a safety demonstration for the campers at Summer in the Parks. (\$200 town donation)
- Culverts: Decided to coordinate with Gateway committee to request guardrails for both Railroad Street and Washington Grove Lane.

The next meeting will be June 22 at 7:30 pm.

Forestry & Beautification Committee

Barbara Raimondo

On hiatus until Wednesday August 9.

Gateway Committee

Peter Nagrod

- *Welcome Sign correction:* The corrected welcome signs (wording and date) are finished and will be installed by the Town the week of June 12.
- *Installation of identity fencing* at the lake entrance bus stop is still on the RJ backlog.
- *The Fourth Avenue and Grove Avenue walkways* between McCauley and WG Lane continue to be ignored. The committee hopes that dirt/gravel will be installed and that the walkways will be maintained on a reasonable schedule.
- *Trash Patrol:* The committee continues the process of organizing a volunteer force to pick up trash along WG Lane and RR Street on a regular basis. So far the committee has 8 new volunteers.
- *Commercial Corner:* The dumpster removal continues to make slow progress. Ms. Bell seems on board with eliminating the dumpster and having the tenants use traditional trash receptacles. The biggest obstacle is the Town Ordinance limiting their location. The committee is recommending a modification to the ordinance to finalize this project. Next step is a meeting with Ms. Bell and Town officials to discuss this issues and other related issues such as the future bike path. Peter is waiting on Ms. Bell for a meeting date.
- There was discussion of moving the *Johnson Alley guardrails* (which will become surplus once they are replaced by wood) to protect the two culverts on WG Lane. The committee unanimously supported the concept.

Historic Preservation Commission

Rob Gilmore

On Tuesday, May 16, 2023, the Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) met by zoom, starting at 7:30 p.m. and adjourning approximately two hours later. In attendance were Bob Booher, Marilynn Frey, Wendy Harris, Jeff McCrehan, David Stopak, and Rob Gilmore (as Council liaison).

After reviewing and approving the agenda and minutes from the prior meeting, the HPC first reviewed project plans presented by Philip and Lynn Mento, new owners of 102 Center Street, concerning structural changes to the second-story mid-section of their home. The commission then heard an update concerning the Whetstone Spring Restoration. Following that update, the HPC discussed the planning for the Town's 150 Year Anniversary Celebration.

Next, the HPC discussed the proposed preservation/demolition ordinance, including the Planning Commission's work on the ordinance, potential changes to the HPC's process to account for the ordinance if adopted, and the need for and approach to addressing demolition by neglect. There were additional discussions concerning corrections to the architectural survey. A

discussion of the Town Meeting and the Town Council's prior meeting (at which the RASEC resolution was passed by the Council) completed the meeting.

Lake Committee

Mary Warfield

- *Wildlife* - island light is on; no snapping turtle sighting; continuing to monitor for wildlife activity.
- *Maintenance* - water level is back to level; fencing is being monitored for holes with new barbed wire fencing to prevent climbing where needed; two cameras are working.
- *Pond water management* - dye added 5/5; water lab testing monthly May-August
- *Lifeguards* - Five prospective lifeguards and some other inquiries; in person meeting with lifeguards to be scheduled; continue to advertise.
- *Swim instructor* - still advertising.
- *RASEC* - continue monitoring for possible need for lifeguard de-escalation training.
- *Future meetings* will be monthly on the second Tuesday.

Lighting Committee

Barbara Raimondo

Meeting with Pepco June 8 on their new tariff proposal.

There have been ongoing negotiations between the municipalities and Pepco concerning Municipal Street light ownership. Both sides have recently presented what they have agreed on and what they don't agree on to the MD Public Service Commission (PSC). However, there hasn't been any further decision from the MD PSC.

The Lighting Committee will not be meeting this June or July. The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 23rd at 7:30pm via Zoom.

Maintenance

Peter Nagrod

- Peter is setting up a meeting with RJ Landscaping to discuss process and improved communications between all interested parties.
- Immediate projects include:
 - Painting posts

- Replacing/repairing damaged signs (including the Chestnut/RR & WG Lane/McCauley “McCathran Hall & Methodist Church” entrance signs; three “No Thru Street” entrance signs; and signs with graffiti).
- Maintenance of overgrown shrubbery on streets and walkways
- Placing new street signs at Oak/WG Lane, Center/WG Lane, Grove Ave/WG Lane, Fourth Ave/WG Lane and Hutch’s Way/WG Lane.

Maryland Municipal League

John Compton

Nothing to report this month.

McCathran Hall

Barbara Raimondo

Nothing to report this month.

Montgomery Municipal Cable

John Compton

MMC staff have experience assisting municipalities with using hybrid meeting. To make possible successful hybrid meetings in the Hall and in the Town Council Room, Station Manager Melissa Aymold has offered to advise the Town on appropriate equipment needed and with training. The prerequisite is that the internet service and WiFi are robust throughout the Hall, which is not presently the case. Plans are to install Verizon Fios service, with the expectation it will be significantly more reliable than our current Comcast service. An advisory group will meet in June to discuss solutions for improving WiFi speed and bandwidth, and to identify the audiovisual capabilities we want for successful in-person and hybrid meetings.

Planning Commission

Peter Nagrod

- The Planning Commission voted to discontinue having bi-monthly meetings reasoning that, with more focus, all tasks can be accomplished with one monthly meeting.
- 336 Ridge Road fence permit was approved.
- WSSC put in a PW & PP for emergency work to be done on Chestnut Avenue. The sewer line will be replaced. Mayor Compton and Georgette Cole met with WSSC. The permit was granted with several conditions
- *ADU Process Planning:* The Commission discussed, at length, the Montgomery County ADU process and how it could be modified to meet Town needs. They all agreed that parking regulations must be clarified as well. The PC wanted to make it clear that it is not

able to make the decision allowing ADUs. That decision would be made by the Town Council. The PC, however, will write the ordinance and use language supporting ADUs from the Comprehensive Plan.

- The PC agreed that the Town should finish the block survey project. The result will be a master location record/map of all survey markers. Snyder & Associates may be invited to provide guidance.

Racial and Social Equity Committee (RASEC)

Barbara Raimondo

Subcommittee/Workgroup Updates:

Covenants – Charlie

Restrictive covenant modification documents have been prepared for three additional homes in response to requests. Three "Intake Sheets" have been sent to the property owners and are awaiting their signatures. They can take them to the Clerk of the Circuit Court in Rockville or return the signed page to Charlie as he has offered to submit this third collection of Town documents if they would prefer. Charlie has a request for another home which he expects to prepare this week.

The Governor has approved the legislation passed by the Maryland Senate and House *"authorizing a county or municipality to execute and record a restrictive covenant modification to an unlawfully restrictive covenant for a property within the boundaries of the county or municipality after providing persons with an ownership interest in the property with 30 days' written notice; providing that persons with an ownership interest in property that is subject to an unlawfully restrictive covenant may decline action by a county or municipality to execute and record a restrictive covenant with certain notice; etc."*

This will be effective October 1, 2023, and allow the mayor to sign the "Intake Sheet" in lieu of the current requirement for signature by the property owner(s).

[Restrictive Covenants](#) folder in [Council Handbook](#)

Film and Discussion Project –Chazz Wilson/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.

Neighboring Communities Storytelling Project – Chazz Wilson

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 7-9 pm), *Musical Memories* (October 19th 7-9 pm).

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- June 10, June 17, July 8: Deconstructing Karen Film Viewing and Discussions about Racism.
- June 15, 7:00 pm-9:00 pm: Virtual Storytelling- Theme: Freedom

Recreation Committee

Eva Patrone

- Summer in the Parks currently has 15 enrolled campers. All three employees have been hired:

- Tali Kuperberg: Camp Director
- Max Mento: Assistant Director/Senior Counselor
- Annie Cooksey: Junior Counselor

Eva held a logistical meeting with Max and Tali and Landon (former Camp Director). She will meet with Max and Tali in person on Wednesday, June 7, to show them the hall, the lake, the woods, the field, and the supplies in the maintenance shed.

- Yoga in the Grove Continues for the Summer! Town resident and certified yoga instructor Rachel Schwartz will continue to offer a free yoga class on Tuesday evenings from 6-7 pm in McCathran Hall (no class July 4). For July and August, students will need to RSVP to Rachel at soferrs@gmail.com by noon on Tuesdays. Yoga class will be held each week in the summer as long as there is sufficient interest.
- The Rec Committee held a meeting via Zoom on Wednesday, May 31 at 7 pm. Emily Cavey decided that, although she has stepped down as SITP moderator, she will continue as Rec Committee Chair for the time being. The next Rec Meeting will be June 21 at 7 pm.
- Plans for music weekend are:
 - Friday June 23: 5 pm at Maple Lake.
5 pm-6 pm children's singalong
6-7:30: Grover Musicians will lead the town in a campfire sing along.
(Bring your own dinner, s'mores will be provided)
 - Saturday June 24: HPC speaker mid-day (more information will be provided as we approach music weekend)
 - 6-8:30 pm Live music under the stars at the Gazebo. Bring your own dinner and a blanket! Snow cones and popcorn will be provided.
 - Sunday June 25: 10:30-12 pm Enjoy a Jazz POTLUCK brunch at the Gazebo. Mimosas will be provided.

- Children's Youth Recital: July 14th 6 pm. More details will be provided as the date approaches.
- The Rec Committee may also do family event on July 8. Details to come.

Recreational Facilities (Woodward Park, Playground and Tennis Courts)

Eva Patrone

The picnic area has been created. Eva is thinking that maybe now we need some new picnic tables.

We are currently looking for a few more volunteers to help close the gate at night.

Community Garden Update: On May 30, 11-½ pounds of greens were harvested, bringing the total to 68.5 pounds this year and 108.5 pounds since the start of the garden. It was delivered to So What Else, a food pantry that specializes in fresh produce.

The garden was weeded, the sweet potato row was prepared with aged horse manure, purple sweet potato slips were planted, peas were staked, and the tomatoes were supported with donated cages.

Roads and Walkways

Rob Gilmore

Nothing to report this month.

Shady Grove Crossing

Christine Dibble

Nothing to report this month.

Sustainability Committee

Mary Warfield

- Discussed the Sustainable Maryland submission and identified missing items.
- The revised Pilot Incentive Program was discussed. It will be put on Monday's TC agenda. The general timeline would be June - presentation, July - questions and revisions from TC, Aug - introduction of resolution or ordinance, Sept - start program.
- Reviewed a list of other related incentives from Fed and State. These will be further investigated.

- Reviewed the annual Pepco Sustainable Communities Grants for 2023. Too late to apply this year, but there could be refunds for our projects.
- Reviewed a link to a private company that provides help for municipalities in grant writing.
- Reviewed the discussion with Skyview about their contract for a community solar subscription for the three Town accounts.
- Pepco will conduct a ribbon cutting for the EV chargers at 11 on Saturday. Utility Advisors will set up a booth for community solar. The MoCo EV specialist will also attend.
- Bruce reported on the composting course he took and how informative it was. There are things we should investigate at the municipal level.

Website and Communications

Christine Dibble

New content:

- Agendas and minutes for Council, HPC, Planning Commission; Council Reports; Town Bulletin
- Resolution 2023-01 and Ordinance 2023-02
- Updated version of Planning Commissioners and Their Terms, 2009 – Present
- New posts:
 - 2023 Annual Town Election and Meeting
 - 150th Anniversary Celebration Schedule, August 10 – 13, 2023
 - 150th Anniversary: About Phil Edwards
 - 150th Anniversary: Puppet Musical
- Home page features/announcements:
 - Grove alerts (sewer replacement, IPC pesticides)
 - Volunteers needed to water new trees
 - Upcoming events
 - Doug Tallamy presentation
 - News you can use: mattresses now accepted for recycling; how to report trains that block Aitcheson Crossing

Woods Committee

Christine Dibble

The Woods Committee met on Monday, June 5 and discussed the following:

- **May 31st SC/FB/WC-hosted webinar “Homegrown National Park”:** Some of the Woods Committee members were able to attend the presentation; those unable to will be able to watch it on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW1fu2hh51E>. In the presentation, Dr. Doug Tallamy explained how the rise of idealized American suburbs over the past

decades has resulted in homeowners planting great expanses of lawn in favor of native plants like paw paw, spicebush and viburnum. These native plants support pollinators, and the demise of these plants in suburban areas is partly responsible for the reduced numbers of pollinators and other insects. Committee members commented that while native plants thrive in Town, we need to keep up our efforts to reduce deer populations and invasives such as Japanese barberry, which provides an ecological niche for tick survival and displaces native plants.

- ***Plant control:*** Committee members noted that our plant control contractor IPC will be focusing on removing Japanese knotweed and wisteria in the East Woods this week and will return in early July to tackle mile-a-minute. IPC will also remove stiltgrass from the edges of walkways to keep walkways passable and reduce tick exposure, although it is so prolific that attempting to remove it entirely from the woods would be ineffectual.
- ***Whetstone Spring Restoration:*** Committee members will go “rock shopping” at Irwin Stone with Steve Werts and Jim Quinn to find suitable stones to reinforce the banks of the spring, and a capstone for the main spring.
- ***Stormwater Mitigation and Soltesz contract:*** Peter Nagrod, Dave Cosson, Bob Booher, John Compton and co-chairs Patty Klein and Joan Mahaffey had an introductory meeting a few weeks ago with Jason Mills, an environmental engineer with Soltesz. At that meeting, the group reviewed the scope of work and timeline. The committee has not heard from Jason since that meeting; Patty Klein will contact Jason to determine next steps. Patty noted that because recent media reports have noted that Congress may try to claw back unspent ARPA funds, the Town should ensure that we spend our funds on storm water mitigation projects as soon as possible.
- ***New Tree Planting and Care in the East Woods:*** Joli McCathran asked whether anyone is keeping track of the percentage of trees we have purchased from Stadler Nurseries that have since died. Ten percent is considered a “normal” loss rate for a 12-month period. Joan noted that four out of the five hollies we purchased died. The majority of Stadler trees planted have survived. She also noted that we need more residents to volunteer to water the new trees in the East Woods. Christine posted a prominent feature on the website to request volunteers.
- ***Memorials Policy:*** The updated policy document approved by the Town Council which provides for town resident requests to have their cremated ashes be mixed with the root ball of newly planted trees is now on the website, off the F&B Committee page.
- ***Dogwood vs. Cherry Trail:*** There is still confusion over where the Cherry Trail ends and the Dogwood Trail begins in the East Woods. Committee members determined that the length of the trail all the way from McCauley to Ridge, spanning the trail section where the newly repaired footbridge was constructed, will be called the Dogwood Trail. The Cherry Trail extends from the intersection of the Dogwood trail (fork) adjacent to the old

exclosure to Center Street. This decision will allow us to finish and post a map of East Woods trails on the website.

- ***Next meeting:*** The Committee will not meet in July due to the Independence Day holiday. The next meeting is Monday, August 7 at 7:30 PM via Zoom.