

TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS—June 2009

FORESTRY & BEAUTIFICATION – Georgette Cole

Forestry Committee is taking a break for the summer.

Maria and Audrey have worked out a watering plan with Jim Fletcher. However, due to the amazing rainfall we have had since March, the water wagon has not been needed yet. Instead, the team has been using the allotted 5 hours (max) per member per week to weed and mulch the trees installed in November 2007 which are currently on their second year of watering. This improves water retention and reduces competition for nutrients from the grass and weeds. It also makes the trees easier to mow around and reduces root damage due to soil compaction.

Tree removal: We will start removing dead or dying trees again after July 1. Jim and I have put together a list of trees (and tree stumps for grinding) and Jim is getting bids from three contractors who have a good track record with us.

ROADS AND WALKWAYS – Georgette Cole (my last update)

The fiscal 2008-09 road repairs were completed on schedule by L.H. Musser & Sons. This firm also handled the walkway graveling. The latter project was especially well done and I recommend their work for town graveling that may be done in 2009-10.

PLANNING COMMISSION – Georgette Cole

The Planning Commission met on June 3.

A fence permit for Jessica Jones at 411 Chestnut Avenue (front yard) was approved.

The Commission reviewed revised plans from Ralph Hurst detailing the modifications required at 103 Brown Street. In order to conform to the BZA approved plan Ralph and the Commission agreed to a gambrel roof design. Ralph was asked to resubmit drawings of what he will be doing for the Commission to review before work commences. As requested by the Mayor, the work in question should be started within 2 months.

PC/HPC Work Sessions: The third work session was held on May 27 and a fourth is planned for June 24.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL – Ted “Kelly” Ventresca

Was honored to represent TC and Washington Grove at the Memorial Day Observance in Gaithersburg with Pastor Judy where there was brief hello/introduction to Gaithersburg Mayor, county and state officials.

Discussed utilizing our intergovernmental relationships for cost saving on purchases and material recommendations. This advice came from Charlie, whose mentoring and continued involvement, if he has the time will be most appreciated in future intergovernmental interaction.

WEB SITE – Ted “Kelly” Ventresca

Town Website: Two important website related actions were undertaken in response to suggestions/comments regarding timeliness, transparency and access to information. From a meeting that webmaster Bill Saar and I had, a new “Calendar” tab was created for the front page. This allows immediate access to town related information and events with easy viewing by day, week, month, year, or via a list. Very efficient, easy to read and well done by

Bill. We have let the calendar run for three weeks “live” without promotion to test functionality. It is running perfectly and link will now be provided to washingtongrove@yahoogroups.com, the Yahoo ListServe.

We have addressed timeliness issues with the posting of the “Town’s letter re: Casey 6&7” under our newly created heading “**Town Testimony**” (**Public Statements made on behalf of Washington Grove**). This new addition to the website provides every resident with online access the opportunity to view town related public testimonies/letters. The link to the exact page location was promoted on the town website home page as “NEW” and that link was provided to washingtongrove@yahoogroups.com, the Yahoo ListServe. Many positive comments from townspeople on the new element of the site included “Good addition for improving communication about our various “issues” & “you've sure made it easy to get the info!” I recommend we mention these two new web features in the next town newsletter for residents who are online but not part of the yahoo ListServe.

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS – Ted “Kelly” Ventresca

An early morning meeting with Jim Fletcher provided me with a wealth of information, thoughtful recommendations, and a need for council discussion and decision on what I regard as long overdue attention to aging playground elements that could pose a physical and/or financial liability to our town. I recommend to the Mayor and Town Council six action items to be addressed as soon as possible:

1. Replacement or modernization of certain playground elements starting with the vintage “merry-go-round” and the broken rope-climbing portion of the most recent multi-purpose equipment purchased 5 to 10 years ago.
2. Saving and preserving “specimens” of vintage playground elements that the TC determines need to be replaced or modernized
3. Mulch related suggestions and future cost saving/fund raising concept
4. Drainage recommendation as detailed by Jim
5. Discussion regarding wooden and metal baseball back stops
6. Revisiting the need for tasteful yet effective barriers to deter damage to soccer field

CONTRACTS – Charlie Challstrom

Special Trash – A total of 15 households put out items for the June 6 Special Trash Collection. There were six dishwashers, two lawn mowers, two exercise machines, stove, double oven, washer, dryer, grill, bed frames, bookcases, paint cans, and smaller items. Collection at one household was missed, but those items were placed at roadside after the 7:00 a.m. deadline. Our contract provides for two special collections per year.

Walkway Graveling Feedback – Five residents offered recommendations for areas for additional gravel, and many residents complimented the graveling work recently done. One resident objected to the almost paved look of the new gravel and asked that the new gravel be removed. Another resident asked that the Second Ave gravel alignment (as it intersects Grove Ave) be straightened; note the same curved intersection was done at Third Ave. Thus far, it appears there has been no vehicle traffic on Second Ave since the new gravel was installed, and I do not recommend any straightening.

Contract Surveys – A draft notice to proceed for the next block survey (Block 16, bounded by The Circle, Sixth Ave, Seventh Ave, Grove Road, and Dorsey Street) was sent to Snider & Associates to verify current block survey cost. Two households requested assistance regarding

surveying work done by Snider & Associates related to a survey marker along Sixth Ave, a marker moved at least twice in the last two months by unauthorized individual(s). And the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation updated their website for the Rothrock property at 407 Acorn Lane, removing the erroneous area of Johnson Alley after receiving Planning Commission Resolution No. 2009-01 with a plat by Snider & Associates.

LAKE COMMITTEE – Marida Hines

John Hutchinson reports that the Lake is in great shape:

Algae: Jim Fletcher and Bruce treated the lake with Cutrine, and John Mudre has been by several times to check on pondweed, which so far hasn't shown much activity.

Life Guards: Eric and Marida have done an excellent job recruiting 6 repeating Life Guards, scheduled their hours, lectured them on their responsibilities, and replenished their supplies. Thank you Eric and Marida!

Swim Instructor: Tom Land reported that Courtney will be teaching the first 3 weeks, and Lauren Kern from Gaithersburg Aquatic Center will teach the 4th week. Lauren Selby will be the parent overseer of the lessons. Thank you Tom and Lauren!!

Fish: Lots of bluegill, bass, a few catfish, and one Koi. All seem healthy. (Plus a few snakes, turtles, and bullfrogs.)

Geese: We successfully foiled the hatching of goslings, and shooed away the two geese with the help of dogs and our scary laser.

Bridge: Jeremy Hollis, a Boy Scout from Montgomery Village, proposed doing an Eagle Scout project to replace the bridge to the Island. However, the design was not compatible with our needs, so we thanked him, but "No Thanks."

Security: No one has come forward yet to volunteer for the job of security guard. So far no incidents at the lake. We will "wait and see" if there are problems, but stay on top of any incidents, and have reminded the Life Guards to be very pro-active about reporting any incidents.

Other: The lifeguards have been instructed to clean the Lake area regularly, including raking the sand and picking up toys and clothing that people leave strewn around. The Lake experience should be more pleasant as a result.

RECREATION COMMITTEE – Marida Hines

The 2009 Music weekend is taking place as I write my report. The Recreation Committee has really outdone themselves, with a Blues band, beer and pizza on Friday June 18, a Children's Recital on Saturday morning, the ever-popular Rock & Roll Relics on Saturday evening, and the famous Baroque Breakfast featuring the Homewood Brass on Sunday morning. All events are scheduled to take place at the Gazebo or, in case of rain, in McCathran Hall.

The July 4 Festivities have been organized and are ready to go. There will be no brunch this year, just the band, parade and prizes, and popsicles.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION—Joe Clark

The HPC met with the Planning Commission to figure out appropriate ordinances for Town to effectively deal with the issue of mansionization. There will be a series of work sessions

followed by a public hearing and hopefully, adoption of an ordinance by the Council. The Commission is also considering various means to promote a better understanding of the Town's many historic structures and the importance of maintaining their original character, both to the community as a whole and the individual owners.

There were no applications for review presented.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT – Joe Clark

Contacted the Montgomery County Fire Department to arrange a community meeting about fire safety in our homes. The date will be forthcoming.

I contacted both the Police Department and the division of traffic planning regarding concerns about the traffic problems which might be created by the closing of the Humpback Bridge. They are aware of it and of our concern. When anything major arises, we have people to whom we can go.

MEMORIALS – Joe Clark

Nothing to Report

MAINTENANCE – Joe Clark

See forwarded list.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION – Sylvie Favret

Town Archive: David Neumann discussed how the Town Archivist, Missy Yachup, has been working on the start of a long process to enter data into the PastPerfect Small Museum database software.

Casey 6 and 7: Bob Booher sent a letter to the Montgomery County Planning Board dated October 10, 2009 – Bob mainly addressed the location of Crabb's Branch Way and Amity, and the preservation of existing forested buffers.

Report from Susan West: Susan West works for the Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions. In September 2008, she attended the HPC monthly meeting. Susan submitted her site visit findings and made a number of recommendations for improvements to the HPC's operations. David Neumann circulated a list of concepts and ideas given by Susan West.

Information about old windows in the Town Bulletin – could also be posted on the Town Website as well as a link to the Maryland Historic Trust about tax credit. This will be checked with Ted Kelly.

Education: With the help of the Woman's Club, the HPC should have someone talk about the tax credit.

Discussion on the proposed change in zoning and lot coverage resulted in the decision that the HPC will share their thoughts with the Town Council.

McCATHRAN HALL – Sylvie Favret

No activity this month.