



Parkwood

Residents Association - Winter 2010 Newsletter

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 18th, 7:30 at Kensington Parkwood Elementary School

Letter from the President

Bailey Condrey, PRA President

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I trust that the spirit of the season made a heartfelt impression upon your homes and loved ones!

The year 2010 has been challenging for Parkwood on a number of levels, both within the neighborhood and across the region. We continue to deal with issues of public safety, but we're bolstered in our efforts by local law enforcement, and local and state elected leaders. In terms of traffic, the Parkwood Residents Association, voted nearly unanimously (29-1) at the meeting in September to place portable speed cameras, on the main streets serving Kensington Parkwood Elementary School. Unfortunately, the process is involved and will require that Saul Road and Parkwood Drive be resubmitted for traffic evaluation. The county currently has 100 requests for street studies and ours will be placed appropriately in the queue. The county is renegotiating the contract with the equipment provider which will further add to the delay, and the studies are not conducted from November through February, due to unfavorable weather conditions.

PRA has been represented on the Coalition of Military Medical Center Neighbors since 2008. The Coalition works to help ensure that the needs of communities and businesses surrounding Bethesda Naval are given due consideration in the Base Realignment and Closure process that is moving Walter Reed Army Medical Center to Bethesda. In communicating our needs, we have always placed the veterans first. This has been a complicated process that delivers gains and setbacks.

In October, the Coalition learned that the activity of the BRAC Implementation Committee, on which many Coalition members sit, would be downgraded in importance, well before the vast majority of

the infrastructure work surrounding Bethesda had even begun. We crafted a letter to County Executive Ike Leggett that convinced him that the work of the BIC was essential to the successful completion of these numerous projects. He has concurred. A full story surrounding these efforts can be read at the following link: http://www.gazette.net/stories/11242010/potonew210043_32543.php

In November, the Coalition was informed that the \$300 million allocated for infrastructure improvements around Bethesda Naval and Fort Belvoir in the FY10 Defense Appropriations Bill no longer existed. It had been placed in a medical services account and was only available for one year. When it was not reprogrammed for transportation, it was used for the medical treatment of traumatic brain injury – we think. On November 23 we met with staffers of Senators Mikulski and Cardin, to help determine how this funding might be reacquired during the end-of-the-year legislative session. The House and Congressman Van Hollen are working to get new language into the FY 11 spending bill that avoids the earlier problem and facilitates a way for Defense money to support infrastructure around the base. The Coalition, working with the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce wrote a letter for co-signing by veterans groups to be sent to members of Congress, but the response was tepid.

We have now run into a situation where Congress either passes an omnibus appropriations bill or a continuing resolution, to fund the government, during the remaining weeks of this session. There is a chance that the former mechanism may prove fruitful for re-securing this funding, but it remains uncertain.

I'm sorry that we greet a new year with bad news. We have always communicated the needs of our military veterans as a primary reason for why the base infrastructure improvements need to be adequately funded. It seems illogical that we would build a world-class treatment center inside the fence, and leave disabled veterans stranded in traffic within sight of their destination. I look forward to discussing how Parkwood can raise the stakes on this important issue at our next meeting, Tuesday, January 18th, at 7:30 p.m. at Kensington Parkwood Elementary School. The PRA hopes you can make it.

Beautification Committee Update - Operation Doggie Pot

Gail Dalferes Condrey, Chair, Beautification Committee

Operation 'Doggie Pot Installation' is complete. The four dark green metal boxes are located at:

- The easement between Edgefield Rd and Parkwood Dr
- The intersection of Wildwood and Dresden
- The park entrance where Saul Rd. dead ends into Parkwood Dr.
- On the backstop at Kensington Parkwood Elementary baseball field

All are encouraged to use these biodegradable or your own bags to dispose of pet waste. If you find a dispenser is empty or low, notify: Gerald Sharp or Kira Lueders for the dispensers near their homes (#1 & 2) or Bailey Condrey or Gail Dalferes (#3 & 4). Also an extra dispenser is available if you think there is a need for one in a public area of Parkwood and you would be willing to maintain it.(cont.)

PRA Officers

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Operation Doggie Pot(from page 1)

This fall the Beautification Committee worked with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) in keeping with the PRA vote to purchase two new signs to mark entrances to the neighborhood. One sign will be located at the Cedar Lane and Parkwood Drive entrance, the other at the Beach Drive and Franklin Street entrance. Each will look like the original community marker located at Cedar Lane and Saul Road. Look for the two new signs in the first quarter of 2011. The timing is predicated upon processing required MNCPPC paperwork and the installation schedule of SMI Sign Systems Inc.

Russell Arrington of MNCPPC helped with placement options that maximize sign visibility without impeding traffic flow or safety. Russell also introduced us to Mohammed Turay, MNCPPC Park Manager I, who was recently assigned responsibility for the portion of Rock Creek Park that borders our community. Mohammed has requested repairs to fix drainage issues at the end of Saul leading into Rock Creek, and has offered to partner with the PRA beautification committee to plant native trees, bushes and bulbs to beautify that section of the community. We thank both Russell and Mohammed for their assistance and eagerness to collaborate in PRA beautification efforts.

This spring work will begin to reinvigorate borders at Saul Island where new plantings will find a home. Thank you for the special contributions you make to beautification efforts in the neighborhood each year and for your help to maintain the community spaces.

Government Agencies Identify Preferred Design Alternative

After analyzing various designs and reviewing public comments, collaborating federal, state and local agencies have reached a consensus on a Preferred Alternative for the Rockville Pike (MD 355) Crossing Project between the Medical Center Metro Station and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda. They have agreed that the best design to provide greater access to transit, promote pedestrian safety, and help mitigate gridlock is "Alternative 2B," a combination of a shallow pedestrian underpass between the Metro station and NNMC, and a bank of deep elevators on the NNMC side of MD 355 to the Metrorail platform. In addition, the project would include Transportation System Management and Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM) improvements, such as at-grade pedestrian and bicycle safety enhancements and extending the existing southbound left turn lane into NNMC at South Wood Drive.

– Additional information on Alternative 2B can be found at the following link:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/>

exec/brac/pdf/pedaccess-station3-alt2bmapping-072010.pdf

Collaborating agencies include:

Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation (MCDOT)
Maryland Dept. of Transportation (MDOT)
State Highway Administration (SHA)
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)
Maryland-National Capital Parks & Planning Commission (MNCPPC)
National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)
Dept. of Defense (DOD)
Defense Access Roads (DAR) program
Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB)
National Naval Medical Center (NNMC)
National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Office of the County Executive

The collaborating agencies need to determine what funding will be available for the entire project and which of the two main components -- the underpass or the deep elevators -- should be constructed first based on available funding. The consensus is that the pedestrian underpass would provide the safest access for neighborhood pedestrians and for bus and rail commuters using the Metro station, while the deep elevators would provide the most convenient Metrorail access for NNMC personnel. Currently pending in Congress are two funding sources: a \$20 million DOD request for this project in the President's budget under the Defense Access Roads (DAR) program; and a House of Representatives amendment to fund transportation projects in communities around BRAC impacted military hospitals. The fate of the two funding sources is unknown at this time.

Coalition of Kensington Communities Update

Update provided by: Elizabeth Brennan

The CKC continues to meet bi-monthly to discuss and monitor issues impacting the Kensington area. Topics in 2010 included:

White Flint Sector Plan: CKC testified in front of Park and Planning and the Council in opposition to the proposed volume of new housing proposed – 10,000 new dwellings which necessitates a new elementary school, police department and library, all very expensive infrastructure that the tax payer will need to support. Despite concern by existing residents, the council unanimously approved this plan. At this time the council is deliberating on how the infrastructure will be paid for. There are several plans under consideration. The CKC's position is that the new development should pay for all of the infrastructure and operating costs for this new development including the new roads, power, water, etc. and that the existing residents should not bear the burden of increased taxes for this new development.

Kensington Sector Plan: CKC testified in July 2009 in support of the proposed sector plan with a request to revisit the traffic portion of the plan.

CKC testified in front of the county council in February 2010 in support of the plan. In particular the CKC stressed that Kensington residents need the opportunity to remain in Kensington for shopping and entertainment. It was noted that currently this is a very limited option with residents being forced to shop on Rockville Pike and to find entertainment in Bethesda, and these two areas are now extremely over crowded. CKC reminded council members that at the first community meeting held on the sector plan, over 300 comments were received by residents with common themes of "less gas stations" "more diversified commercial options" With the onset of the Bethesda Naval Hospital/Walter Reed merger (as a result of the federal Base Realignment project – BRAC), the redevelopment of White Flint and Wheaton and the proposed new development in Chevy Chase, it will become more critical for Kensington residents to have the option to shop and dine, etc closer to home. It should be noted that the CKC began meeting on the Kensington sector plan issue as early as 2003 and has been a regular stake-holder at all community meetings.

County Council Elections: In early September, prior to the primary, the CKC hosted a county council candidate's forum for the at-large seats. All nine seats of the council are up for election every four years. CKC is represented by Valerie Ervin in District 5, and she ran unopposed. There were nine candidates running for the four at large seats. CKC surveyed residents to collect questions, the majority of which were focused on development and safety issues.

Outreach with Elected Officials: Throughout the year, CKC members met with the council at-large representatives and Ms. Ervin to ensure that there is a continued and open dialogue with elected officials. In November the CKC met with the new Planning Board Chair Francoise Carrier to discuss the impacts of development in the down-county area

Other issues that the CKC has tracked this year include the Costco gas station proposal (which we opposed), county budget issues (voice concern of reduction of funding for fire/police), Wheaton sector plan (local residents are meeting with Park & Planning to resolve issues), discussion of increased vandalism and theft (representatives encouraged each civic association to have the community police liaison speak at their local meetings to address these problems).

The CKC is a unified body of area civic associations with the goal of enhancing the quality of life in the Kensington area. Toward this end, CKC works with local governments to address issues of urban design, recreation, transportation, pedestrian accessibility, and economic growth affecting greater Kensington. Participation is open to any civic group or governing body in the Kensington area that shares our commitment to improving the welfare of our communities.