

# Parkwood

## Residents Association - Fall 2012 Newsletter

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 2nd at Kensington Parkwood Elementary School, at 7:30 p.m**

### Letter from the President

*Bailey Condrey, PRA President*

As summer wanes, school moves into full swing and we get to enjoy a week of glorious weather – a great time to be outside with friends and family. I hope you got outside.

The next meeting of the Parkwood Residents Association is important. We need to elect new officers to the Executive Committee, which we failed to accomplish at the last meeting because we lacked a quorum. Regardless of whether you plan to attend the KPES PTA meeting on October 2nd, try to make it to the PRA meeting downstairs to help elect new officers. Elections will occur at the end of the agenda.

Maryland State Delegate Alfred Carr has graciously accepted an invitation to speak at this meeting on how we as ratepayers and engaged citizens can improve PEPCO's reliability. It all starts with getting the Maryland Public Service Commission to ensure that improved reliability standards are met and exceeded. This may be difficult as PEPCO corporate culture and management strategies have not been directed at improving the infrastructure, heretofore. The company performs in the lowest quartile nationally of power distributors. A number of ideas have been raised on how we can move PEPCO in the right direction. Some of them include:

- \* Placing PEPCO Holdings shareholders dividends in escrow.
- \* Cutting the pay of senior executives at the company until service improves.
- \* Tying senior executive pay to performance based rate standards.
- \* Forcing shareholders to pay senior executive salaries.
- \* Create a sliding scale that ties the company's rate of return to performance metrics. They only receive the currently guaranteed rate of 9 percent if they are performing at an A+ level.
- \* Make the company's performance metrics publicly available.

Del. Carr will shed light on what is being done at the state level to improve the situation and how we as citizens and various groups can work together to enact meaningful change.

Land use issues have been at the top of the County Council's agenda lately. Among them, passing legislation to change the standards and approval process to make siting accessory apartments easier, all in the name of increasing "affordable housing." Having paid close attention to the discussion at the Council public hearing on September 11, I came away thinking this was a bit of a red herring. Rent control doesn't exist across most of the county; and with the high rise apartment buildings coming online at White Flint and other locales, where is the shortage of affordable dwelling units? Not to mention that the Department of Housing and Consumer Affairs doesn't have the budget or the time to inspect the accessory apartments currently on the books. Stay tuned...

The meeting on Tuesday, October 2nd, will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the multi-use room on the lower level of Kensington Parkwood Elementary. Please try to make it. The agenda will also cover an update on community lighting; committee reports; a Kensington Sector Plan update; and new business. The agenda will also be circulated on the PRA list serve.

### Beautification Committee

*Gail Dalferes Condrey, Chair, Beautification Committee*

Greetings neighbors. This summer Beautification Committee members were out weeding and adding a few perennials to the five gardens maintained by your generous donations. A crew from Bella Landscaping was hired to weed the spruce tree at Saul Road. And the meeting signs are in! The new signs will be hanging out under the entrance signs the week before the meeting to remind you to attend.

The gardens continue to thrive with their native plants and established root systems. The color burst at Wildwood has been non-stop all summer! As have the entrances at Parkwood/Cedar and Cedar/Saul. The entrance at Franklin/Beach has struggled a bit to allow the plants living there to thrive. We continue looking for good shade loving, deer resistant perennials to augment that space.

This fall the area under the Saul spruce tree will be weeded again and mulched. Other projects

on deck include a proposal by Park & Planning to remove the bamboo stand at the entrance at Beach and Franklin; mulching trees in various islands; adding a planter to the medians on Saul and Oldfield in front of the elementary school; and a proposal by residents to build an in memoriam garden at Parkwood/Parkwood Terrace. Want to know more? Join us at the PRA meeting.

### DOD \$40 Million Grant

*Excerpts from U.S. Department of Defense News Release*

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced on August 6<sup>th</sup> two grants from the Office of Economic Adjustment, including a \$40 million grant to Montgomery County for transportation access to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), Bethesda. The grant will facilitate commuting for patients, service members, and civilian employees. The 2005 Base Realignment and Consolidation round increased personnel at WRNMMC by almost one-third to 10,200, and doubled the visitor load to 1,000,000 per year.

The funding is part of a \$68 million project, which previously received \$28 million from the Department's Defense Access Road Program. The funds will be used to design and construct a shallow pedestrian and bicycle passageway under Maryland Route 355 connecting the Medical Center side to the Metro Station; and three high-speed elevators to connect the Medical Center at street level to the Metrorail mezzanine level. The county will complete the project in coordination with the Maryland State Highway Administration, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the National Institutes of Health, the Federal Highway Administration's DelMar Division and the Command at NSA Bethesda.

Funding for these grants is provided under the \$300 million program authorized by Section 8110 of Public Law 112-10, The DoD and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011, which enabled the Department of Defense to finance projects for transportation infrastructure improvements associated with medical facilities related to the 2005 round of the BRAC process.

## Energy Matters

Electricity (and lack thereof) was a primary concern in Parkwood this past summer after another round of power outages amid record-setting heat.

In response to major outages caused by the June 29, 2012 Derecho Storm, the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) scheduled a series of evening hearings for the purpose of receiving public comment on the performance of Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO), The Potomac Edison Company and Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (collectively "Joint Utilities"). The PEPCO hearing ([http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=7&clip\\_id=353](http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=7&clip_id=353)) was held August 7, 2012. In the packed hearing room that evening, Montgomery County residents gave the PSC a clear directive: Fix it now. Residents declared ([http://parkwoodresidents.org/docs/PSC\\_Hearing\\_on\\_PEPCO.txt](http://parkwoodresidents.org/docs/PSC_Hearing_on_PEPCO.txt)) again and again in the four-hour hearing in Rockville that years of infrastructure and maintenance neglect must be the responsibility of PEPCO executives to restore, and that fixes must not continue to be paid on the backs of residents and ratepayers. The same day, PEPCO held a conference call with investors to state their intent to file another rate request this fall and to continue pounding the 'rate-cases drum'.

The Maryland Public Service Commission is the only body with regulatory authority over PEPCO, making it extremely important that resident concerns are heard by this state agency. No decisions will be made by PSC regarding remedies for PEPCO performance issues until after the September 13 hearing by PSC with the utility companies.

In the meantime, homeowners can look for other ways to lower energy costs. Two ways to cut power bills are to consume less energy, and if possible, to generate renewable energy onsite.

Power conservation methods include sealing air leaks in your home, adding insulation, improving air duct systems, improving heating/cooling systems, and upgrading to energy efficient lighting and appliances. To evaluate where your house is losing energy and to assess how efficiently heating/cooling systems and appliances are operating, you can find a certified contractor to perform an energy audit on the Maryland Home Performance website (<http://www.mdhomeperformance.org>). Currently, participating contractors will perform an energy audit for \$100 (typically a \$400 value) through a PEPCO program. PEPCO also has information about energy efficiency and several additional programs (<http://www.pepco.com/energy/conservation/meiin/>).

Renewable energy systems include solar panels, solar hot water, ground source heat pumps and small wind turbines. Many of the same contractors who perform energy audits also can evaluate whether any of these systems will work in your home. As with any large project, it pays to ask neighbors about their experiences and to get bids from more than one contractor.

The State of Maryland Energy Administration offers several programs to offset the cost of energy conservation and renewable energy systems, some through PEPCO, and others through grants and loans (<http://energy.maryland.gov/Residential/cleanenergygrants/index.html>) and tax credits (<http://energystar.supportportal.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=23018>). Contractors may help you navigate through the process of applying for state and federal grants and tax rebates. To more easily access the webpages listed, visit the PRA website for an electronic version of this newsletter <http://parkwoodresidents.org>, click on "Letter" which is the 3<sup>rd</sup> link down on the lefthand side).

## Water Works

According to a June 29, 2012 news release, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) raised rates effective July 1, 2012 for area customers. First, the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fee (BRF) was doubled and second, water and sewer rates were increased by 7.5%.

The BRF fee was passed by the Maryland Legislature and signed by Governor Martin O'Malley to double the fee from \$2.50 to \$5.00 per month. WSSC collects the BRF, commonly referred to as the "flush tax," on behalf of the state. BRF revenue funds Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) improvements to wastewater treatment plants throughout the state, which are primarily designed to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus pollution into the Chesapeake Bay.

Residential customers can request an exemption from the BRF if they face financial hardship. To qualify, customers must meet at least two of the following four criteria:

1. Receipt of energy assistance or WSSC Water Fund assistance within the last 12 months.
2. Receipt of public assistance or food stamps within the last 12 months.
3. Receipt of Veteran's or Social Security disability benefits within the last 12 months.
4. Meet income criteria.

Those who qualify for an exemption must re-certify annually. To find additional information or apply for the exemption, visit the online exemption application (<http://www.wsscwater.com/file/CustomerCare/bayfeexemptionform.pdf>) or call (301) 206-4001.

The second type of increase to customers' bills-- the 7.5 % rate increase effective July 1, 2012--will fund water and sewer reconstruction programs, inspection and repair infrastructure and increased costs of Sanitary Sewer Overflow Consent Decree compliance. The rate increase would add approximately \$4.86 per month to the bill of a customer who uses 210 gallons of water per day. For more information, see [www.wsscwater.com](http://www.wsscwater.com).

## Lighting Upgrade Update

At the Fall 2011 PRA meeting, members voted to allow the executive committee to pursue improving the lighting at various places in the neighborhood. In our conversations with the county and PEPCO, we learned that the only reasonably-priced lighting available in the short-term are the current lamps – high pressure sodium (HPS). Also, PEPCO will only install additional lights on existing poles currently without lights.

Given that this short-term option is less than optimal, we opted to pursue installing new HPS for only limited circumstances while we await a better neighborhood-wide solution. Via a listserve survey, homeowners identified 12 sites where new lights could improve pedestrian safety, prevent opportunistic crime, and/or illuminate school bus stops. After these requested locations were forwarded to the County, Tom Shoemaker of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (DOT) surveyed the neighborhood with PRA representatives and reviewed the request for each of the 12 sites. PEPCO has since approved 4 of these sites, and DOT will request installation by the end of October. PRA will continue to work with Mr. Shoemaker until installation at all requested sites is completed.

It will take time and effort to bring the new street lighting to the neighborhood. The Maryland Public Service Commission proceeding involving PEPCO lighting rates has been finalized, and PEPCO and Montgomery County have reached agreement on rates, terms and conditions. It continues the current arrangement where PEPCO owns all street lights and rents them to the County using a tariff schedule. In the latest agreement, PEPCO added rates for LED lighting. Unfortunately, the high rate for induction lighting puts this type of efficient lighting out of reach for most areas. Furthermore, the rates for the current HPS lights are about 5 times higher than what competitive vendors charge. PRA will continue to work with DOT, PEPCO and Delegate Al Carr to explore options.

## PRA Fall Elections

ALL TERMS ARE FOR TWO YEARS

The Parkwood Residents Association is in need of volunteers to help run the organization for the next two years. Elections for several executive committee positions will be held at the next meeting on Tuesday, October 2nd, at 7:30 p.m., in the multi-purpose room at Kensington Parkwood Elementary School. Brief position descriptions follow; more detailed information can be found in the PRA Bylaws (see "Docs" section on [www.parkwoodresidents.org](http://www.parkwoodresidents.org)).

**PRESIDENT:** Attends various meetings with county officials and local, state and federal politicians on the issues that are relevant to the community such as the BRAC expansion of Bethesda Naval Hospital, public hearings, and county council meetings. Schedules regular meetings of the PRA to keep members informed of progress and to effectively move action items for the community. These meetings are set up through the County's Community Use of Public Facilities office. Coordinates with the vice president to publish and distribute a regular newsletter that is hand-delivered to every home in Parkwood. Establishes a liaison relationship with various county entities, Parks, Traffic Engineering, County Arborist, Police, Schools and others. Makes regular postings to the listserv on issues that affect the community and attempts to provide timely information on various subjects. Works with the web master and listserv moderator when necessary. Networks with the vice president and other officers on various issues to reach consensus on next steps. Works with beautification chair to ensure that projects slated for Parkwood are accomplished. Coordinates drafting the budget.

--Current President: Bailey Condrey,  
[blcon350@verizon.net](mailto:blcon350@verizon.net)

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Shares information with other PRA officers and members as liaison to various regional committees upon which he/she serves. Coordinates with the president, membership chair, treasurer and newsletter distribution chair to coordinate writing, printing and distribution of a regular newsletter. The VP is responsible for the content of the newsletter, its printing and its delivery to the newsletter distribution chair. VP stands in for the president at regular meetings in case of absence. Helps in drafting the budget.

-- Interim Vice President: Lara Akinbami,  
[tojohnlara@hotmail.com](mailto:tojohnlara@hotmail.com)

**TREASURER:** Oversees the checking and interest-bearing accounts of the PRA and reports regularly on their status. Reimburses officers for expenses and pays for costs incurred in running the Association. Networks with Membership Chair and others to coordinate the annual PRA membership drive. Ensures that PRA membership dues and beautification contributions are received from the membership chair, deposited to the accounts and tracked appropriately. Helps with drafting the budget. The treasurer also files annual federal and state of Maryland tax forms for the PRA.

--Treasurer: Gerald Sharp,  
[gbs2001@yahoo.com](mailto:gbs2001@yahoo.com)

**SECRETARY:** Records the minutes of regular PRA meetings and shares a transcribed copy of the minutes with PRA officers for editing, posting to the PRA web site and listserv, incorporating final comments and/or edits, before having them approved by the PRA membership at subsequent meetings. A final record is then delivered to the web master for final placement on the PRA web site. Networks with other officers on issues of importance to the community. Helps in drafting the PRA budget.

-- Secretary: VACANT

**BEAUTIFICATION CHAIR:** Works with funds donated by members of the community and dues to coordinate and carry through on beautification projects ratified by members of the community and the PRA board. Works with Park and Planning officials, volunteers and paid labor, to beautify the common areas of the neighborhood. This involves the planting of gardens, mulching of trees and maintaining existing green spaces and gardens. Networks with other board members and members of the community on issues of importance. Helps in drafting the budget.

-Beautification Chair: Gail Dalferes Condrey,  
[gdalferes@gannett.com](mailto:gdalferes@gannett.com)

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIR:** Works with the treasurer to ensure that PRA dues and donations are transferred into the appropriate accounts. Develops and maintains database of PRA members and donations to Beautification Committee. Helps to coordinate the annual PRA membership drive.

--Membership Chair: Pippa Eibel,  
[pippa\\_eibel@yahoo.com](mailto:pippa_eibel@yahoo.com)

**WEBMASTER:** Oversees the PRA web site at [www.parkwoodresidents.org](http://www.parkwoodresidents.org), ensuring that new content is posted and old content is archived. Works with other officers to ensure that timely and topical information is prominent on the site. Ensures that the web site works effectively and that older content is archived appropriately. Works to place meeting minutes on the site in a timely manner.

--Webmaster: Peter Mansbach,  
[pmansbach@aol.com](mailto:pmansbach@aol.com)

**LISTSERVE MODERATOR:** Ensures that the listserv at [parkwoodresidents@yahoogroups.com](mailto:parkwoodresidents@yahoogroups.com) works effectively and moderates the exchange of ideas when necessary. Provides tips to the community on how to most effectively use the community e-mail application.

--Listserve Moderator: Chris Dewey,  
[cdpwd@yahoo.com](mailto:cdpwd@yahoo.com)

**BLOCK CAPTAIN:** Oversees the distribution of the PRA newsletter in a timely fashion to the group of volunteers that delivers it to the roughly 940 homes in the neighborhood. This is usually done one to two weeks in advance of the members meeting to give residents time to inform themselves of the issues that will be discussed. Also works each year on the membership drive in a similar manner.

--Block Captain: Kira Lueders,  
[kklar1@yahoo.com](mailto:kklar1@yahoo.com)

**CKC REPRESENTATIVE:** Community representative to the Coalition of Kensington Communities. Keeps Parkwood informed of issues that are relevant to the neighborhood and the region by regular attendance at CKC meetings and participation in discussions by the group. Reports at regular PRA meetings and provides content to the newsletter.

--Interim CKC Reps: Lara Akinbami and Gail Dalferes Condrey

**WELCOMING COMMITTEE CHAIR:** Maintains a welcome packet and reaches out to new residents. When new residents move into the neighborhood, the listserv affords an excellent opportunity for sharing that information with the WC chair for follow-up.

--Interim Welcoming Chair: Valerie S. Gottron,  
[valeriebend@gmail.com](mailto:valeriebend@gmail.com)

*In Memoriam Dedications:*

*Elizabeth Damiani: Jan Rothman of Glenridge Street dedicated a portion of her 2012 PRA Beautification donation in memory of Elizabeth Damiani, age 99, mother of Karen Lockyer, mother-in-law of Chuck Lockyer and grandmother of Larissa, Charles and Daphne, all residents of Parkwood for many years.*

*Tom Cox: In April, a donation was made to the PRA Beautification Committee in memory of long-time Parkwood Drive resident Tom Cox, 66, husband of Sue Cox, father of Tommy Cox. Around that time, the Cox's mourned the passing of Celtie, 14, their beloved Golden Retriever. The donor, Jan Rothman, noted Tom would be pleased to see the garden at Saul and Wildwood where he, Sue and Celtie walked every day.*

*Bill & Win Walsh: Kathy & Dave Byars made a donation in memory of Bill & Win Walsh of Edgefield Road. They were longtime residents and original owners who spent many enjoyable hours shaping the lives*

*of the neighborhood kids - playing touch football and organizing plays performed by kids & parents in their backyard.*

*In Memoriam donations/dedications will be published for a period of time on the PRA website as well as in the newsletter that follows the donation/dedication.*

**Update on PRA Treasury Receipts and 2012 Expenses**

*Gerald Sharp, PRA Treasurer*

So far this year, the PRA has received \$2970 in membership renewals and \$2598 in donations to the Beautification Committee, a total of \$5568. This exceeds the \$4920 received in 2010 and the \$5335 the PRA received in 2011. Also the PRA received \$250 in membership dues and \$260 in donations in December 2011, which represented payments made early for 2012. Beautification donations so far this year ranged from \$2 to \$200, with most people who donate giving \$10. About half of households paying their annual dues this year also made donations to the beautification fund. Assuming that December 2011 payments were for 2012, there are 322 households in Parkwood that have paid their \$10 annual dues this year, which is about a third of the 950 households in Parkwood. This is first year that the PRA has allowed payment of dues and donations to be done online using credit cards. Twenty PRA members took advantage of this new technology so far this year, paying \$200 in membership dues and

making additional donations of \$175. The cost of using Paypal to receive these online payments was \$16.88, and hopefully this additional cost was covered by the increased number of people who renewed or joined the PRA this year, because we made it easier for them to do so. The PRA has spent about \$3000 so far this year, primarily on beautification efforts and our newsletters, so budget-wise we are well in the black. No deficit spending here. One increase in spending this year was for the doggy potty bags that are supplied free of charge at four dispensers in Parkwood to encourage dog owners to pick up after their pets. With the advent of the Montgomery County 5 cent charge for grocery bags, it seems like more people are taking advantage of our free bag stations. If you would like to establish and maintain a doggy potty bag dispenser in your area of the neighborhood, let me or one of the other PRA officers listed on our website know.

**New to Parkwood?**

Do you have new neighbors? Have you moved into Parkwood recently, or maybe not so recently but would still like a warm welcome or some information about the community and surrounding areas? The PRA Welcoming Committee Chair, Valerie Gottron, has prepared Welcome information packets for new neighbors, and for the new at heart. Please send the street address to Valerie ([valeriebend@gmail.com](mailto:valeriebend@gmail.com)). She will deliver a welcoming packet right to the door.

**2012 Parkwood Residents Association Membership/Renewal**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 annual dues (Checks payable to PRA)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ donation to Beautification Committee (optional)

**Send to: Pippa Eibel, 10120 Cedar Lane Kensington, MD 20895**