

Parkwood

Residents Association - Winter 2013 Newsletter

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 19th, at Kensington Parkwood Elementary School, at 7:30 pm

Letter from the President

The winter solstice has come and gone. The cold spells that we experience for the next few months are offset by the fact that daylight minutes are on the rise. So while you may be cold, at least the darkness wanes.

A number of issues present themselves for the PRA's consideration at the next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, February 19th, at 7:30 p.m. in the multi-use room on the lower level of Kensington Parkwood Elementary School.

One of them is the neighborhood's trees, which have been dramatically pruned in many places and completely removed in others. The first round of this was due to county efforts to forestall the spread of disease and remove structurally dangerous trees. The second round was pursued in keeping with the Public Service Commission's directions to PEPCO to improve reliability. As part of the overall goal of improving service, PEPCO went after the low hanging fruit, so to speak, by taking out the tree canopy where it impacted electric lines. Having neglected this duty for years, it has had a very visible impact on the tree canopy in Parkwood. Local realtors tell us the impact may begin to affect property values. However, we can take a more aggressive role in seeing that trees are replanted in Parkwood on an expedited schedule, but we may have to commit some of our collective time and put up some funding to make this happen.

The following are some ideas that have been discussed with county and PEPCO representatives. The ideas are a starting point for PRA members to come to an agreement on an approach that will place new trees in the ground as soon as possible. Drawing a line in the sand and saying we can't do this or that won't be productive. We need a plan.

One of the easiest steps involves homeowners calling the county to request replanting where trees have been removed. If a property owner has sufficient frontage on a street, a new tree does not need to be replanted in the space occupied with a stump. A list of available tree species will be provided at the upcoming meeting on Feb. 19th, as well as the correct number to call and a contact, if possible.

The neighborhood has a backlog of roughly 52 stumps that need removal. The PRA has roughly \$13,000 available for use by the community. We could ask PEPCO to match funds with us in the name of good community relations to get the grinder spinning. The PRA could offer to spend \$2,000 with PEPCO providing a match and the county looking for funds dedicated in other places that will not be spent. We can also write to our Council representatives and tell them that we want monies found to begin paying for the stump removal that is holding up replanting. We could also hold a fundraiser in the neighborhood by having a dance party, bake sale, Parkwood walkathon, or some other event. We could block off a street such as Wildwood with a large median to hold this fundraiser with bands, etc.

These are some ideas that have been offered and ones that we can consider for expediting tree planting. While not everyone may want a tree in front of their home, these ideas offer a good starting point for those seeking to replace trees, and provide a basis for this important discussion at the next PRA meeting.

This will involve the entire community so come prepared to offer your time and effort to contact members of the county council, to organize an event or to serve on a committee to help make this happen.

The agenda for the meeting will also cover our membership drive, support for the

Welcoming Committee, the search for a new secretary, neighborhood beautification efforts, an update from our Treasurer, BRAC-related infrastructure improvements and new business.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Bailey Condrey,
PRA President

Recycling Review

County residents can recycle more and more stuff (rinse it first!) in the recycling and trash collection. Call 311 to receive a new bin.

Small blue bins:

- *Plastics--resin numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7. This includes flower pots, tupperware, beverage cups and any caps and tops.
- * Glass bottles and jars
- * Aluminum foil products (wrap, trays, pie plates)
- * Metal food cans and aerosol cans (non hazardous contents only)

Leave out: plastic bags& wrap, window glass

Large blue bins with lid:

- * newspapers, magazines, catalogs
- * hardcover and paperback books
- * spiral-bound notebooks
- * white & colored paper (shredded or not)
- * boxes (cardboard, food)
- * milk and juice cartons
- * frozen food containers
- * egg cartons (cardboard only)
- * paper bags and cups
- * mail (with or without plastic windows)
- * all other clean and dry paper

Leave out: paper towels, napkins, tissues

For more information, visit: <http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/dep/solidwaste/collectionservices/curbside.asp>

BRAC-related transportation improvements status

Traffic improvements to accompany the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) will continue for several more years. Most work is being undertaken by the Maryland Department of Transportation's State Highway Administration. The Department of Defense recently released an additional \$12.6 million in funds for BRAC-related roadway improvements. Construction has recently begun in earnest on Rockville Pike:

--The first step already underway is moving underground utility lines between the Beltway and Jones Bridge Road, and is anticipated to take about one year.

--A longer queue area for Rockville Pike southbound traffic waiting to turn left onto eastbound Jones Bridge will be created.

--Signs will be added to turn one of the Rockville Pike southbound through lanes into a second left-turn-only lane onto eastbound Jones Bridge during the afternoon rush hour.

Projects on Cedar Lane will include:

--Widening Cedar Lane on both sides of Rockville Pike to begin in fall of 2013 and last until 2015. This will include periodic closures of Cedar Lane.

--An additional right-turn lane from West Cedar onto northbound Old Georgetown Road will begin in summer 2014 and last one year.

There are also changes taking place on Connecticut Avenue that are expected to be complete by fall of 2013. These were funded by a release of \$18.3 million from the Department of Defense in 2012:

--At Connecticut Avenue and Jones Bridge Road, a right-turn-only lane on southbound Connecticut Avenue will be added to carry traffic exiting the Beltway to head west on Jones Bridge toward NIH, WRNMMC and Bethesda.

--Part of the Connecticut Avenue median will be used to create an additional northbound lane between Manor Road and the Beltway.

--A third left-turn lane from eastbound Jones Bridge to northbound Connecticut Avenue is also planned (but will not begin until 2014).

Finally, the County will begin a major two-year tunneling project beneath Rockville Pike beginning in late 2013 or early 2014. This work was funded by a \$40 million federal grant to Montgomery County. A 120-foot deep shaft for the new set of high-speed elevators on the east side of Rockville Pike

will be placed near the military hospital entrance to provide access to the Metro platform, and a 20-foot-deep pedestrian tunnel beneath the roadway will also be excavated to provide a crossing to pedestrians and cyclists who do not use Metrorail. These projects are designed to remove pedestrians from the busy crossing at Rockville Pike between the military center and the Metro Station at the National Institutes of Health.

During the construction process, officials have said all lanes on Rockville Pike will remain open in the peak direction during the rush hours. But as you already have probably experienced, delays will inevitably occur.

The Montgomery County BRAC website provides additional information: http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/brctmpl.asp?url=/content/exec/brac/projects_glance.asp#Paths, and a recently updated timeline of projects is available: http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/brac_projects_timeline.pdf

Rainy day plans

Kira Lueders, PRA Block Captain Committee

Spring is right around the corner, and we are beginning to think about gardening again. Montgomery County is offering increased rebates for gardeners who install rain gardens on their property through its RainScapes program. Residential properties will be eligible for up to \$2500 in rebate money, with the individual rebate amounts based on a \$1.00 per gallon model. That is, for every gallon of water a project can store, the County will rebate \$1.00. A Brookside Gardens Rain Garden Workshop will provide an overview of water management for residential yards (Friday, March 1st and Saturday, March 2nd from 10 am - 1 pm).

The County provides rain barrels at a cost far less than those commercially available. The Brookside Gardens Rain Barrel Workshop is more educational than hands-on, but rain barrels with fittings and instructions for installation are provided at this workshop (Friday, April 12th and Saturday, April 13th from 10 am - 1 pm).

Finally, if you decide a conservation-based landscaping would be desirable to install in

your own garden, there is a third workshop to find out more. This Conservation Landscape Workshop (Friday, May 31st and Saturday, June 1st from 10 am - 1 pm) takes into account topography of your individual property and provides a wealth of information. A rain garden planted with appropriate native plants can be a butterfly and hummingbird magnet.

All workshops require registration and payment of a \$10 fee. You can find out more information and register at www.parkpass.org. For more information about Montgomery County RainScape resources, visit the Department of Environmental Protection webpage: <http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/dectmpl.asp?url=/content/dep/water/rainresources.asp#presentations>.

Federal Tax Credits for Consumer Energy Efficiency

Did you make energy efficiency modifications to your home in 2012? If so, you may be eligible for a tax credit. The Energy Efficient Property federal tax credit was reinstated with the American Taxpayer Relief Act. There are three different credits.

First, a 10% tax credit up to \$500 applies to qualified energy efficient home improvements in your principal residence. Improvements include insulation, air sealing, replacing heating/cooling systems or hot water heaters, and window/door upgrades. However, if you have taken this credit in the past, you cannot claim the tax credit again (contact the IRS for information). This credit expires 12/31/2013.

A 30% cost credit (no upper limit) applies to geothermal heat pumps, residential wind turbines and solar energy systems in both principal residences and second homes. This credit expires 12/31/2016.

The third credit is for 30% of the cost up to \$500 for residential fuel cell and microturbine systems. This credit expires 12/31/2016.

More information is available at: https://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=tax_credits.tx_index

2012 Treasurer's Report

Gerald Sharp, PRA Treasurer

As shown in the report below, PRA income in 2012 was \$3120 from membership dues and almost as much from donations to the beautification fund, \$2793 for the year. Interest rates were low in 2012, and the Wells Fargo accounts, where we keep a limited amount of funds, earned just 4 cents; the ING account earned \$40.15, less than in previous years, because of the lower interest rate. This was the first year that we allowed membership dues and donations to be made by Paypal,

which allows use of credit cards. A total of \$520 was paid using Paypal in 2012, about 9% of total receipts. Paypal fees for 2012 were \$23.22. As shown in the report which documents PRA receipts and expenses since 2000, receipts peaked in 2012. Administrative costs were similar to those in previous years; newsletter costs were slightly higher; and beautification costs were higher than average but less than half of those in 2011 when we installed the new entrance signs for Parkwood. In contrast to 2011, when the PRA spent more than we took in, in 2012 PRA receipts exceeded PRA expenses by \$2168.76.

Demand for Doggy Potty bags at the four dispensers the PRA maintains in Parkwood was increased in 2012, and this was the only spending category where we spent more than was budgeted (\$490 vs. \$300 budgeted). These free bags have become very popular, perhaps because of the reduced use of plastic grocery bags with the new Montgomery County bag tax. As of December 31, 2012, the PRA had \$12,259.75 in our various accounts, which is a record high amount. We will consider possible ways to spend these funds for the benefit of Parkwood at our upcoming PRA meeting.

2012 Expenses		
Category	Approved budget amount	Actual cost
Administration		
<i>Membership expenses</i> , address labels (\$25.04), postage (\$44.00), stapler (\$81.39)		150.43
Welcome packet for new residents		28.45
Bank fees (\$0) and Paypal fees (\$23.22)		23.22
Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) annual fee (\$35 for 2011, \$35 for 2012)		70.00
Website domain fee		34.95
Misc. admin expenses		47.56
Admin, other Total	\$1300.00	\$354.61
Newsletter		
January (\$222.60); March (\$580.88); and Sept. (\$360.40); envelopes (\$8.26)	\$1600.00	\$1172.14
Beautification		
Plants & mulch		962.83
Labor costs	2500.00	430.00
Hanging meeting signs at entrances	300.00	266.85
Doggy potty bags	300.00	490.00
Beautification Total	\$3120.00	\$2149.68
Meeting Room Rental		
January (\$36); April (\$36); and Oct. (\$36)	150.00	108.00
Total Budgeted and Actual Expenses	\$6170.00	\$3784.43

2012 Receipts and Balances			
Membership Dues	Beautification Donations	2012 interest income and (12/31/12 balance) in PRA accounts	Total 2012 receipts and assets at end of year
3120	2793	Wells Fargo: 0.04 (316.81)	\$5953.19
		ING: 40.15 (8423.64)	(\$12,259.75)
		*Paypal: 0 (297.78)	
		Cash: (21.52)	

* A total of \$520 in dues and donations was paid through Paypal in 2012, the first year we used this service

2012 Treasurer's Report, cont'

Income and Expenses Since 2000

Year	Income		Expenses				Income Minus Expenses \$
	Dues, donations, \$	Interest \$	Admin / other \$	Newsletter \$	Beautification \$	Meeting Rental \$	
2000	305.00	4.94	0	290.89	48.25	25.00	<54.20>
2001	55.00	0	0	0	0	0	55.20
2002	1200.00	4.72	13.27	1222.25	262.00	57.50	<350.30>
2003	2102.00	1.91	21.19	1173.47	261.34	19.50	628.41
2004	1915.00	1.68	780.40	862.51	235.00	36.50	2.27
2005	3680.00	2.20	59.15	1078.01	1100.00	0	1445.04
2006	2750.00	6.52	56.78	1148.72	1900.00	67.50	<416.48>
2007	2971.00	8.58	383.00	930.00	700.00	90.00	874.58
2008	4752.75	57.40	172.92	986.93	847.44	52.25	2750.61
2009	5225.00	90.27	290.60	1479.25	714.22	107.25	2723.95
2010	4920.00	81.73	496.17	677.33	720.56	84.00	3023.67
2011	5335.00	73.89	601.20	752.39	5607.23	93.50	<1645.43>
2012	5913.00	40.19	354.61	1172.14	2149.68	108.00	2168.76

Property Tax Assessments

In December 2012, homeowners in Parkwood should have received their triennial assessment notice from the State Department of Assessments and Taxation. Current property assessments are also available in the online database: http://sdatcert3.resiusa.org/rp_rewrite/.

Property owners have the right to appeal tax assessments believed to be inaccurate. You must sign and return the appeal within 45 days of the date of the notice (hurry-this may be as soon as February 11th). If you have questions or need assistance with the appeals process, Delegate Al Carr has offered to help: alfred.carr@house.state.md.us or 301-858-3638.

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). She will deliver a welcoming packet to your door.

Connect to PRA online

You don't have to keep track of the hardcopy of the newsletter to find out what is going on in Parkwood. You can visit the neighborhood website at www.parkwoodresidents.org. This site houses the basic information about PRA including an archive of meeting minutes and an electronic version of the PRA newsletter (where you can go to click on the hyperlinks included in the newsletter). There are also instructions on how to join the PRA listserv which offers a forum for exchanging information about issues ranging from recommendations about local services to updated crime reports from police.

Are you a current PRA member or volunteer?

Thank you to all the paying members of PRA and to all those who volunteer their time and energy. Membership is \$10 annually per household and covers PRA expenses including rental fees for the PRA meeting venue, membership fees in County associations, website maintenance costs, and welcome packet expenses. Separate contributions support the beautification committee that maintains the plantings in several areas around the neighborhood and engages in special projects such as purchasing new neighborhood signs and benches. Other

benefits include being a voting member in PRA (each person in a household is covered by the \$10 fee) to elect PRA officers and vote on PRA by-laws and resolutions.

Send your check (payable to PRA) to Pippa Eibel, 10120 Cedar Lane, Kensington, MD 20895. A preaddressed envelope and membership form is attached to the newsletter near the beginning of each year for your convenience. If you are not sure of your current membership status, please email Pippa at pippa_eibel@yahoo.com.

Volunteering is another way to support PRA. If you would like to become involved with the Beautification Committee efforts to upkeep the islands in Parkwood, the Welcoming Committee in making new residents feel at home in the community, organize a block party or anything else for our neighborhood, please contact any PRA officer:

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blcon350@verizon.net

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