

Parkwood

Residents Association - Winter 2016 Newsletter

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 16th, 7:30 pm at Kensington Parkwood Elementary School

Featured Speaker: Delegate Jeff Waldstreicher (D-Montgomery) from District 18 in the Maryland House of Delegates will speak at the next PRA meeting and provide the community with an update on upcoming legislation and other issues. The Maryland legislative session has just begun and this is a good time to hear about what will be considered this year and to express your opinions to one of our representatives.

Many bills will be introduced, but one in particular will help to reduce air pollution and improve the state's position relative to renewable energy technologies. Currently the state allows for the combustion of biomass, municipal solid waste and black liquor [a waste product from the creation of paper pulp] to count towards renewable energy credits. The new legislation will remove these incineration technologies from receiving credits in the state's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards. To learn more about this subject visit the [Maryland Sierra Club website](#).

President's Letter-Kira Lueders

As I write this, I'm looking at the amazing amounts of snow in my garden, and once more thinking how fortunate I am to live in Parkwood. Neighbors came out the day after the snow stopped to clear walks and cars, and to help each other. We're all grateful that the power stayed on since we haven't been so lucky in some past storms, and we were able to stay connected on the PRA listserve to maintain our sense of belonging to this community. Our Maryland House Representatives, Jeff Waldstreicher and Al Carr, join us on our listserve and offer their help too. PRA has invited Jeff to our next meeting to speak about issues to be taken up in the 2016 session. We hope to invite Al to visit us at one of our future meetings.

The preparation of this newsletter has fallen to me. I thank Alex Clark, Jeff Griffith, and Gerald Sharp for their help in getting the newsletter published. We have a volunteer for the position of PRA Vice President and will vote on it at this meeting.



Digging out after the blizzard –Alicia Ault

This newsletter contains a number of interesting items including: a valuable update on the **Kensington-Parkwood library renovation**; the background and status of solutions planned to address **overcrowded classrooms at K-P elementary school** as well as the **Walter Johnson High School and its feeder schools**; brief notes on the **Kensington Farmers Market** during this winter and the **Kensington Day of the Book Festival** (April 2016); a report on **some of the legislative and policy ideas of Peter Franchot**, Maryland's Comptroller; a summary of three reports by the County's Office of Legislative Oversight on **several important issues affecting County schools**; and our **PRA treasurer's report**. We also included 11 pictures (with the names of the contributors) of the nearly 40 photos of the snow storm that you sent in response to my call on the listserve. Thank you very much. All the pictures will be posted on the Parkwood website and Facebook page. If there are other topics you would like to see addressed in the next newsletter, please let me or any member of the executive committee know by email. Our email addresses are on the [PRA website](#).



Icicles galore – Marlane Martin

School and Library Updates- Liz Brennan

KP Library Update: Work on the library is progressing nicely and the target date of late March for the re-opening is still looking solid. The KP Chapter of Friends of the Library (FOL) is still

hosting the author series at Kensington Town Hall. The next event, open to all, is scheduled for 7:00 pm, February 22nd. Local author Paul Dickson will discuss his new book: [*Contraband Cocktails: How America Drank When It Wasn't Supposed To*](#). All are welcome. The KP FOL is sponsoring a contest to build LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES which are mini pop up libraries which invite booklovers to take a book or leave a book as they go about their day. The 'official' Little Free Libraries network aims... "*To promote literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide and to build a sense of community as we share skills, creativity and wisdom across generations.*" Details are on the [website](#).

KP Elementary School Classroom Additions: We are tracking school related topics as they have a big impact on our neighborhood. The Planning Board will review the project to add 14 classrooms to Kensington-Parkwood Elementary. More information is available in the [planning board staff report](#).

Overcrowding at the KP Elementary School has been a constant problem since 2007 – one year after re-opening a newly built facility. The goal is to replace the portables with a classroom addition. This project has been fast tracked by the Board of Education as school capacity issues can invoke a building moratorium. There are currently many proposed projects in the pipeline that will impact the WJ cluster, so there is an aggressive push to find school capacity solutions.

The original 1952 school building underwent a renovation and expansion in 2006 that bumped up its capacity to 472 students in a 77,000-square-foot building. There are 643 students enrolled in the school this year and seven portable classrooms located along the side of the building that faces Saul Road. The approximately 25,000-square-foot, two-floor addition planned by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) would add 14 classrooms and teacher support spaces and expand the existing multi-purpose room. It would increase the core capacity of the school serving kindergarten through fifth grade to 746 students, eliminating the need for portable classrooms. It would be built on the south end of the site on a hilly area directly in front of the main entrance and leave room for a small courtyard between the addition and existing building. The addition project would also bring 10 additional parking spaces, increasing the total at the school to 60 spaces. MCPS hopes to start construction on the project later this year and open the new classrooms in August 2018.

WJ Cluster Weighs Growth Options: There have been several community meetings to discuss overcrowding at Walter Johnson High School and there is a feasibility study to determine another addition to increase capacity from 2335 to 3200. These discussions are driven in part by the expansion at White Flint (called White Flint II) and the Rock Spring master plan review. The White Flint master plan calls for the creation of a new elementary school and at the moment MCPS is considering these options: 1) reopen one of the four closed elementary school buildings in WJ cluster; 2) build a new school (White Flint has proposed main & backup sites); 3) purchase a brand new school site; or 4) use non-traditional sites such as commercial properties or smaller properties. From 2007 to 2015, the WJ cluster elementary population (six elementary schools that feed into the 2 middle schools and then go to WJ) grew by 1,242 students. Both middle schools (Tilden and North Bethesda) are scheduled for additions/expansions. The [Rock Spring and White Flint master plans](#) provide a great deal of interesting data regarding school capacity and development.

Kensington Farmer's Market-Liz Brennan
Every Saturday from 9am-1pm, the MARC Train Station parking lot on Howard Avenue comes alive with vendors selling a wide variety of fresh produce, seafood, meat, breads, olive oil, paella, homemade soaps, cheeses, meat pies, empanadas, cut flowers, cookies and other baked goods. Robbs Edge Express is there twice a month to sharpen your knives, scissors, tools and anything else that needs an edge. The Ktown Farmers Market is one of the few that continues through the winter months.

Kensington Day of the Book Festival, Sunday, April 24th-Liz Brennan
This afternoon street festival celebrates the International Day of the Book with live music, author readings, open mic, activities for children and adults, storytellers, and books, books, books! Local authors, book artists, publishers, booksellers, and literary groups line Howard Ave. in Historic Old Town Kensington to show, sell, and discuss their works. All activities are free, rain or shine. Come celebrate with your neighbors. Check out confirmed authors and children's program [here](#).

PRA and the Montgomery County Civic Federation-Jeff Griffith
The Parkwood Residents Association is a member of the Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF), a not-for-profit, county-wide umbrella group designed

to promote cooperation, education, and effectiveness of civic and community associations in the county. One of its primary goals is to influence county policies in ways that are positive for residents. The MCCF [website](#) contains links to all of its monthly newsletters, which provide detailed information about key issues and Federation activities.

The November 2015 meeting heard from **Peter Franchot**, Maryland's Comptroller and a member of the three-person Board of Public Works (BPW). The MCCF president also gave an **update on the Independent Transit Authority** proposed by the County Executive. See summary below.

The December 2015 meeting focused on **three reports of the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) on Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)** related to after school programs, funding for schools with higher levels of low income students, and criteria for establishing the priority queue for school renovation. See summary below.

The January 2016 speakers discussed **the operations and finances of the Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA)**. This meeting will be summarized briefly on the listserve and more fully on the website.

November 2015 Meeting: Summary of comments by Peter Franchot and an update on the Independent Transit Authority (Proposed)

Peter Franchot, Maryland's Comptroller and a member of the three-person Board of Public Works (BPW), was the speaker. (From the Board's Website: "The Board of Public Works is the highest administrative body in the Maryland state government...and is responsible for the expenditure of all capital appropriations and the [oversight] of nearly all state public works projects. Each year it deals with hundreds of millions of dollars.")

Comments of particular interest:

Common sense school scheduling. Schools should start after Labor Day. This would add 10-14 days onto the tourist schedule and add significant money to the MD economy. Franchot said that teachers and superintendents are opposed. He is concerned about **excessive testing**; wants moratorium on testing for 12 months; we are smothering creativity of public schools; he says "let's put tests on the shelf for a year and see if we are still standing".

Improving financial literacy. Kids should demonstrate knowledge of budget, interest rates, etc. Learn how to handle money. Source of happiness in

life; learn how to finance car loan, pay for groceries. It is a “silver right” rather than a “civil right”.

End Montgomery County alcohol monopoly. (applauded by those attending). Would be a huge boon for MC economy. (County gets \$30M in revenue that could be recouped through increased economic activity). He is proposing a statewide bill. **The Wynne court case will put pressure (\$40M) on the County budget** because of the need for big paybacks to tax payers. More will be due in coming years. (In the Wynne case, the U.S. Supreme Court determined that the MD taxing scheme, by which residents who pay income tax to another state are allowed a credit against the State income tax *but not against the local tax*, is unconstitutional. Therefore County residents are entitled to a refund based on the credit that should have been allowed for the local tax. For further information see [here](#).)

County pays much too much to build schools. He says \$500/SF. He compares this to a beautiful school built recently by Alexandria at a cost of \$250/SF. **MD cannot divest itself of fossil fuel companies like California did.** It would cost too much in revenue.

Our pension systems are in good shape.

INDEPENDENT TRANSIT AUTHORITY (ITA) (Update by MCCF President): The ITA is controversial because it would have independent taxing authority to be used to address county transportation needs. When the County Executive initially proposed the ITA, there were sufficient concerns raised by citizens that the proposal was referred back to the Executive’s Transit Task Force (TTF) for further review. Although the final report of the TTF (October 22, 2015) officially endorsed the ITA (a second time), the President of the MCCF announced that **Executive Leggett has decided NOT to seek legislative approval from the General Assembly this year for the ITA.** This does not mean that the ITA is dead. While it will be off the table for now, it is likely to come to the fore in the future. In the meantime, the President said that the MCCF was in the process of surveying its members for their views on the ITA and that this would go forward, particularly because the ITA could resurface in a year.

December 2015 meeting: Summary of reports on MCPS and other agenda items

OLO assessed *Excel Beyond the Bell* (EBB), an **after school program targeted primarily at students in seven low-income schools.** The report found the program was well regarded by participants but that a valid assessment of its impact on academic outcomes was not possible at this time.

A second report looked at the **achievement gap by student income and addressed questions about whether the school system provides sufficient resources to narrow that gap.** The OLO found that MCPS does put significant federal, state, and county resources into various programs designed to raise achievement levels (Early Childhood Education, Compensatory Education, ESOL, and Children with Special Needs), but questioned the use of approximately 1/3 of federal and state compensatory education funds for general operating expenses (an allowable procedure under federal and state regulations.) MCPS countered that these funds aid all schools, many of which have some low-income students.

A third report looked at the **MCPS process for deciding where and when and at what cost public schools will be renovated or newly constructed.**

OLO identified the need for revising the criteria used to determine which schools should be given the highest priority and also updating the resulting queue on a more frequent basis. According to the OLO staff, MCPS agrees with these recommendations and is taking steps to implement them.

There was also discussion of:

- Legislation being drafted to address the problem of **abandoned properties**
- Creation of a **student loan authority**
- An “emergency” resolution (one not requiring more advanced notification) to allow **bow and arrow hunting of deer on all Sundays of the hunting season** rather than just one Sunday per month. The resolution passed.

Finally, the President made note of a report by a member of MCCF who has identified **questionable procedures by the County in issuing Income Tax Offset Credits** to those who many not qualify for the credit. The revenue loss is estimated at over \$50M.

Parkwood Residents Association
2015 Treasurer's Report¹
Gerald B. Sharp, PRA Treasurer, Jan. 7, 2016

2015 Expenses

Category	Actual Expenses 2014	Actual Expenses 2015	Budgeted Amounts 2015
Administration			
<u>2015 Membership expenses:</u> (envelopes-\$21.20; address labels-\$62.48)	274.75	83.68	
Welcome packet for new residents, bags	329.78	0	
Wells Fargo Bank fees	46.99	157.00	
Paypal fees	17.66	33.38	
Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) annual fee	50.00	50.00	
Website domain fee	34.95	35.95	
Misc. admin expenses	15.99	0	
Administration Total	770.11	360.01	1300.00
Newsletter			
2015: March (\$970.69); Sept (\$0-electronic)	896.99	970.69	2000.00
Beautification			
Mulch, fertilizer, supplies	690.56	893.03	
Labor	2122.50	2350.00	
Plants	249.33	399.29	
Doggy potty bags	337.00	703.86	
Doggy potty bag dispensers		187.00	
Paint for signs, parts for bench		102.86	
Beautification Total	3399.39	4636.04	6000.00
Meeting Room Rental			
2015: Feb. (\$36); Sept. (\$37); and Jan. 2016.(\$37)	108.00	110.00	150.00
Totals	6170.00	6076.74	9450.00

2015 Receipts

Month	Dues/Beautification Donations 2014	Dues/Beautification Donations 2015	Total 2015
Jan-Dec checks and cash	2910 / 2651	2440 / 3098	5538.00
Jan-Dec Paypal	240/100	430/276	706.00
		Sub-total	6244.00
<i>Interest: Well Fargo Checking & Savings (0.04%) (total 2014: 0.12)</i>			0.17
<i>Interest: Capital One Savings Account (0.4%) (total 2014: 41.87)</i>			42.03
TOTAL INCOME 2015			6286.20

¹ All figures in dollars

Income and Expenses Since 2000

Year	Income		Expenses				Income Minus Expenses
	Dues, donations	Interest \$	Admin / other	Newsletter	Beautification	Meeting Room 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
2013	5509.00	36.04	277.18	967.39	1624.88	108.00	2567.59
2014	5901.00	41.99	770.11	896.99	3399.39	108.00	786.50
2015	6244.00	42.20	360.01	970.69	4636.04	110.00	209.46
2015 total	6286.20		6076.74				209.46

Assets

	Dec. 31, 2014	Dec. 31, 2015
Wells Fargo savings & checking accts.	4374.80	4,950.35
Capital One 360 savings acct.	10,505.06	10,547.09
Paypal acct.	701.75	253.01
Cash	14.23	54.85
Outstanding checks	0	0
TOTAL	\$15,595.84	\$15,805.30
2015 Credits	6286.20	
2015 Debits	6076.74	
Dec. 31, 2015 Balance	15,805.30	

PRA Treasurer's Report 2015

By Gerald Sharp, PRA Treasurer

The PRA once again ended the year in the black in spite of increases in our beautification costs from moving from all volunteer labor to paying for labor to maintain the gardens. As you can see in the 2015 Treasury Report (Income and Expenses Since 2000), our \$209.46 surplus is our lowest positive balance since 2011 when we bought the new entry signs and installed a bench at the Wildwood Garden. Beautification costs are in fact at their highest point since 2000, except for that particularly expensive year. Also, of course, we have never before enjoyed the

beautiful landscaping and other amenities that we now have. We managed to maintain the small surplus in 2015 without raising our minimal \$10 membership fee for several reasons: 1) members of the PRA have increased their donations to the beautification committee to where now they exceed the total received from membership dues; 2) we have been able to cut back on other costs by moving to a once-a-year paper newsletter and otherwise distributing it electronically, and 3) by finding a new cheaper source for the doggy potty bags we distribute that have become increasingly popular (we added two new dispensers this year, and now maintain six doggy potty

bag dispensers in Parkwood). Bank charges in 2015 were higher than in past years, because Wells Fargo instituted a \$20 a month checking account fee, but I have shifted funds around, and we will not have to pay that this year. We will discuss this report and the 2016 budget at the upcoming PRA meeting. I hope you will attend to help decide how to best spend our limited funds to improve our neighborhood.

BLIZZARD OF 2016: DIGGING OUT



Shoveling and snow blowing- Mary Bahrs



Is there a car under there? – Margaret Byrnes



No place to park – Peter Mansbach



Saul Rd. Superhero – Mark Thompson



The road at last – Christine Schiponi

SIGHTINGS WONDROUS AND
STRANGE



The bear of the storm – Jeff Griffith



This sign says Parkwood is here somewhere –
Christine Schiponi



Gotta get there somehow – Niclas Bogren



What is that in the driveway? – Niclas Bogren