

# Parkwood

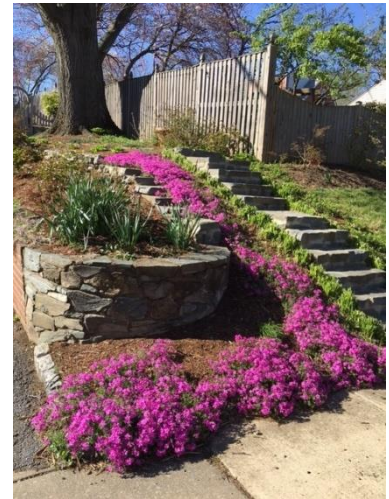
Residents Association - Spring 2016 Newsletter

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 14th, 7:30 pm at Kensington Parkwood Elementary School

## CONTENTS OF THE NEWLETTER

The **beautiful photos of flowers submitted by residents** in response to a request posted on the listserv are shown throughout the newsletter. In addition, there are a number of items of interest to many in Parkwood, including:

- **Program description** for the **upcoming PRA meeting**
- **President's letter** and an update on membership and receipts to date
- Informative **discussion with Delegate Waldstreicher** at the March PRA meeting
- Re-opening of the **KP branch library**
- Update on **schools**
- **Beautification committee** activities
- Summary of the April MCCF meeting on the **County's FY2017 proposed budget**.
- **Kensington Auto Show**



*Creeping phlox next to my driveway  
Katy Dougherty, Edgefield*

**June 14 PRA Meeting:** The topic of the June 14th meeting will be the transformation in Parkwood from the small houses and cottages constructed in the early 1950s to the larger houses with bigger kitchens, family or great rooms, master bedroom suites, garages, and the other amenities that families now expect 60 plus years later. While there have been a number of small additions involving one or two rooms, many renovations in Parkwood have involved adding an entire floor with extra bedrooms and bathrooms on top of these solidly constructed brick homes. Yet another option has been demolishing the existing house and building a new, much larger one. We plan to invite architects, contractors, and home owners to talk at the meeting about their experiences with building these expanded houses, including the ins and outs of these transformations, what renovations work best, how to best make the new or transformed houses fit in with the existing houses, the costs, the problems to avoid, etc. If you know an architect or contractor who has worked in Parkwood, please send their contact information to Gerald Sharp at gbs2001@yahoo.com, and he will invite them to speak at the meeting. And if you would like to share your own experiences as a home owner with renovations -- good and bad -- please send your contact information to Gerald.

## **President's Letter-Kira Lueders**

When I wrote for the PRA winter newsletter, my garden was deep in snow. As I write today, I'm looking at a very different picture. Thanks to Jean Pettit Wirsching who has provided nice pictures contrasting the two seasons in her garden. It was April in 1967 when my husband and I moved into our house on Wildwood Rd, and immediately appreciated how beautiful Parkwood is in the spring. We were delighted to discover that the house was surrounded by an assortment of azaleas, and those azaleas are once again brightening my garden, a testament to how some plants seem to thrive without much help at all.



*Blue bells along Rock Creek*

A few weeks ago, I joined other Parkwood residents in the annual Rock Creek Park clean-up. This year we were again lucky to be doing this just as areas of the park were carpeted in Virginia blue bells. Nature isn't always so accommodating in her timing. Since I've taken part in many clean-ups over the years, it was gratifying for me to find the number of plastic grocery bags very much reduced. No bags hanging from branches over the creek. The bag law was first introduced in 2007, and went into effect in Montgomery County in 2012. In spite of opposition from some quarters with predictions of dire consequences, we seem to be doing just fine with our reusable bags. Unfortunately, in spite of broad support, the Maryland legislature in the 2016 session failed to extend the bag law to the whole state.

PRA has the support of many residents as shown by the close to 300 members who have paid dues and made generous donations for beautification, but we also need people to take an active part in the organization. My term as president ends in June, and it would be great for someone else to take my place. I encourage you to attend our meetings. I

was disappointed at the low attendance at the last meeting, at which we were unable to muster a quorum to elect a new vice president. The executive committee tries to come up with subjects we think will interest the neighborhood, and we certainly would appreciate hearing from residents what they would like to have discussed.

At our next meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup> we will invite architects and contractors who have worked in Parkwood along with residents who have done renovations to their home to talk about their experiences, lessons learned, and recommendations. It will be an interesting meeting and I hope to see many of you there.

**Membership Update-Gerald Sharp, Treasurer.** As of the end of April, 296 Parkwood residents had paid the \$10 annual membership fee, more than the 287 paid-up members for all of last year. Receipts are \$2960 in dues payments and \$3419 in beautification donations, a total of \$6379 so far this year, which is the highest yearly amount in the history of the PRA. Last year the PRA collected \$6244. A total of 186 members (63%) made donations to the beautification fund; the most frequent donation was \$10, and the range was \$5 to \$190. For those who have not yet paid their dues or made a donation, the membership form is on the last page of the newsletter, along with the return mailing address.

We have email addresses for about 90% of paid-up members, and we are sending this newsletter electronically to them. We also plan to mail a paper version of the newsletter to everyone who requested it. However, if you requested a paper version but are able to receive the newsletter by email, it would be helpful if you let me know so we can save the postage by sending it to your email address. If you do receive it by email, you can always print your own paper copy. This newsletter and all future ones will also be available on the PRA listserv and website.

**March 16 PRA Meeting: Discussion with State Delegate Waldstreicher-Judith Dighe, PRA Secretary**

Delegate Waldstreicher spoke briefly of the legislative process and requested questions and items of interest from meeting participants. There followed a wide-ranging and informative discussion.

Questions were asked about **the proposed 5% cap on property assessments**. Mr. Waldstreicher reported that although he voted in favor of the bill, it failed to pass. Property tax revenue primarily goes to the county and the county opposed the cap.

Liz Brennan asked about **a bill to prosecute adults who provide alcohol to teens who are not family members**. Mr. Waldstreicher replied that the bill has moved through the MD House but not the Senate.

Kira Lueders asked the status of the state bill to ban plastic bags. Mr. Waldstreicher said that he doubted that it would pass. The state often waits for big counties to act first. Gerald Sharp asked if it would make more sense to extend the Montgomery County bag tax statewide, since it has been very successful in Montgomery County at reducing litter, rather than passing an outright ban on plastic bags, and Mr. Waldstreicher agreed that such a bill would have a better chance of passing. He also said another example of the state following the county lead is the bill for mandatory earned sick leave that has gained momentum for passage statewide, since Montgomery County has already passed such a requirement.

Montgomery County is unique in that **all County delegates sit on one committee and act in concert on economic matters**. For example, in 2014 they were able to legislate a **raise in the minimum wage** to \$8.25 and thereby give permission for the state to go from \$8.25 to \$10.10 per hour, and rise to approximately \$12.10 per hour over the next several years.

In response to a question, Mr. Waldstreicher discussed the state legislature's response to a **possible ban on certain pesticides**. No resolution has been reached.

Asked if he foresees **new taxes**, Mr. Waldstreicher said that there would be no new sales taxes or income tax. The State Senate is debating income tax relief. He believes that rather than rising, the state income tax will be coming down.

Participants asked about **bicycle policy** and requested help in putting forward **an appeal to reshape the shoulders on Beach Drive**. At the county level, a master plan for bicycles in roadways is being debated.

A participant asked **what Maryland is doing to be more attractive to businesses**. At the state level, a reorganization of the state agency is being finalized.

Concern was expressed over the **MCPS school budget, installation of artificial turf on its playing fields, and the fact that the school system, in effect, audits itself**. Mr. Waldstreicher believes that a bill requiring the state to do periodic audits of school systems is likely to fail. Class sizes rose by an average of one this past year. The County wants to give money to lower class size, but it cannot dictate to the school system how to spend its money.



*Tulips  
Jean Pettit Wirsching on Saul*

A question was asked regarding the **reduction of greenhouse gases**. Mr. Waldstreicher detailed a number of initiatives to speed up renewable energy. Residential solar energy is sold back into the grid, introducing clean sources into the grid. In regard to an expressed concern about a possible **Pepco-Exelon merger**: This is the responsibility of the Public Sector Commission rather than the legislature. The Governor appoints this commission, but because its members are rotating, not all commission members have been appointed by the current governor. Current MD law requires the State to buy power at agreed-upon rates.

**Mr. Waldstreicher urged Parkwood residents to get in touch with him regarding their concerns. He too lives in the neighborhood.**

(<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?pid=sonpage&tab=subject6&id=waldstreicher&stab=01&ys=2016RS>)



### Kensington Park Library

The newly reopened Kensington Park Library welcomes you back. If you haven't seen it yet, you should go soon, whether you have a library card or not. It has become an enticing place, the staff are as helpful as ever, and best of all, the books are back on the shelves and ready for borrowing. If Kensington doesn't have what you want, they will find it if it is in



*Stacks are open for business*

the County system and put it on the hold shelf for you. There is plenty of new seating and lots of computers for you to use. The redesigned children's area is especially attractive.

The idea of a "refresh" for the library came from Parker Hamilton, Director of Montgomery County Public Libraries, who wanted to enhance some of the county's smaller branches without incurring the cost and time that the major renovations to the Silver Spring and Wheaton regional libraries would take. Kensington Park was the second branch chosen for the refresh (others on the list include Davis and Chevy Chase). The Kensington Park Friends of the



*Lots of places to work*

Library (KPFOL) played an important role in both supporting the effort and ensuring that it had features that would be appealing to its many users, both

young and old. Liz Brennan of Parkwood is president of the organization.

In addition to keeping our community informed about the progress of the refresh, the KPFOL reported that the organization raised over \$15,000 to meet some of the needs of the library. For example, Kathie Meizner, the branch manager, wanted to ensure that every square foot of space would be attractive and usable. She obtained tables for the downstairs area and made sure that Wi-Fi was accessible there. The KPFOL then used some of its funds to purchase the materials for a mural for that area and found two young artists from Kensington, Katie Silky and Tina Frizzell, willing to donate their time to create the mural. It was still a work in progress at press time (see photo) but when it is completed it will encompass artistic representations of children's classics, works of mystery, literary classics, fables, poetry, and Maryland authors.



*Artist at work on the mural*

KPFOL funds will also be used to support stair riser art – decals of famous books that will be adhered to the risers on the stairs between the two floors and create the illusion that one is "rising" on the works of great authors. In addition, KPFOL has purchased new outdoor seating that will soon be installed just outside the entrance to the library. Several other improvements have been proposed and are awaiting approval by the County...so there is more to come.

Perhaps KPFOL's most ambitious project is the creation of a literary garden. The library was very fortunate to receive a gift of landscape plans for a literary garden from local resident and landscape architect, Karin Johnson. Karin recently graduated from George Washington University and used the KP Library grounds for her master project to create a literary garden. Her plan includes seven distinct gardens with sustainable elements and design objectives. The intriguing names of these garden areas include: Entrance Garden, Enchanted Forest Garden, Wizard of Oz Garden, Parking Lot Garden, Edible Garden, Children's Garden, and the Dewey

Decimal Garden. KPFOl welcomes support for this project, including donation of plants, seeds, and money. The master plan can be seen at: <http://www.folmc.org/folmc-content/uploads/2015/07/Literary-Garden-Concept-Plan-2015.pdf>



*Children's reading area*

### **Update on School Overcrowding Planning; Almost All Options Impact Parkwood Residents— Liz Brennan**

As reported in the January edition of the PRA newsletter, the Walter Johnson Cluster Roundtable Discussions continue to consider options to address current and future overcrowding in our cluster's public elementary, middle and high school. They have identified a number of possible approaches (listed below). But the information in the link provided really tells the story, and I urge all Parkwood home owners to take a look – ***possible redistricting will impact home values***. Moving to Alternative Schedule or On-line Education Schedule (approaches 6 and 7) as opposed to the traditional high school experience ***will also impact home values*** (as well as educational experiences!) Some of the approaches are highly unlikely, like purchasing land for a new school. Some of the options will pit common sense – e.g., smaller schools are better than larger ones – against boundary changes. The issues are complicated and the Board of Education representatives that are leading the discussions typically have to balance what is best for students with the reality of a development-driven county mind-set. Please review the info below, and click on the link to the full report, which includes current and future enrollment for all schools in the Walter Johnson Cluster, rationale and considerations for the 10 options to alleviate overcrowding, and a list of possible additional school venues on land that is currently owned by either the BOE or the County.

### **Elementary School Approaches**

Approach 1: Construct Additions  
Approach 1a: Open a New Elementary School;  
Remove Ashburton Elementary School Addition  
Approach 2: Reorganize Schools for Grades K–4  
Elementary Schools in Conjunction with Secondary School  
Approach 3: Expand Some of the Elementary Schools for a Capacity of 850-890 Students  
Approach 4: Open an Early Childhood Center  
Approach 5: Open a New Elementary School and Pair It with Ashburton Elementary School

### **Middle School Approaches**

Approach 1: Construct Additions  
Approach 2: Reopen Woodward as a Grades 9-12 High School  
Approach 3: Reopen Woodward as a Grades 9–10 High School  
Approach 4: Reopen Woodward as a Grades 8–9 School  
Approach 5: Use Nearby Commercial Space as a Grade 9 or 9/10 Annex  
Approach 6: Alternative Schedule  
Approach 7: Online Education  
Approach 8: New middle and high schools  
Approach 9: Collocate New High School and Middle School on Woodward Site  
Approach 10: Reassign Grade 9 Students to Middle School and Reopen Woodward as Grades 6–9 School

### **FULL REPORT:**

<http://gis.mcpsmd.org/roundtablepdfs/WalterJohnsonClusterMeeting5Handouts.pdf>

### **Beautification and the PRA—Gail Dalferes**

Condrey, Beautification Committee Chairperson

Greetings neighbors! In this my eighth year as chairperson of the Beautification Committee I want to thank those of you who continue to direct extra donations with your annual PRA dues towards the beautification efforts. Your time or your money – both are welcome!!

This year is about sustainability. Beautification efforts are focused on the three formal community entrances with 'Parkwood' signs, as well as the Saul/Wildwood and Saul/Parkwood community gardens. Spring weeding and mulching has already begun, and in May annuals will be planted to add pops of color to the perennials that return each year. We will continue to use a blend of volunteer work and paid landscapers to help maintain these areas. It was suggested at the last PRA meeting that we engage the local Scout troops to assist with gardening

to save the PRA money while assisting the young people gain community service hours. Please contact me if you have kids (Scouts or otherwise) interested in volunteering in exchange for community service hours.

In April, I met with a representative from the Montgomery County Rainscape program to review ideas for improving the water drainage, and reduce the runoff damage, into the Park specifically for the Saul/Parkwood Park entrance but also for our community in general. I plan to have an update ready for the June meeting so please join us to learn more. We will also update you on the Ash tree health and plans following the removal that occurred throughout the Park in April.

Are you interested in helping plan a community gathering in one or more common areas to share time together enjoying up close the fruits of our beautification efforts? If so, please contact me or anyone on the PRA Executive Committee to join a



*Love Carol Roman's tulips  
Kira Lueders, Wildwood*

group planning this event for the 2016 calendar year.

How else can you help or get involved? If you or someone you know is planning a renovation or otherwise need to get rid of plants or bulbs, consider contacting me to see if we can transplant them to one of the

common areas throughout the neighborhood. I will also collect 'Johnson Bucks' again this spring to use in July for late plantings, so if you earn points you won't use, please drop them off for me to use for the community. If you want to volunteer a couple of hours of your time, we will take it. Monetary donations are great too, but getting out in the fresh air and getting to know your neighbors is what this is all about. I will keep you posted between newsletters by update to the listserv, so if you are not on the listserv email me so I can add you to the list.

Hope to see you soon!

### **Montgomery County's FY17 Operating Budget**

Ike Leggett, the County Executive (CE) has recommended a tax supported FY17 operating budget (including debt service) of \$4.6264 billion, **up \$206.2 million (4.7%)** from the Council-approved FY16 budget. The total recommended budget (including grants and enterprise funds) is \$5.2765 billion, up \$193.8 million (3.8%) from the FY16 approved budget.

The FY17 recommended budget assumes the **first property tax increase above the Charter limit since FY09**. Such tax increases **must be approved by all nine members of the County Council**. The Council is scheduled to make final decisions on the FY17 operating budget on May 19 and to adopt implementing resolutions on May 26.

**The April meeting of the Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) focused on the CE's proposed budget.** Presenters were Jennifer Hughes, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and Steve Farber, the County Council Administrator. Mr. Farber prepared a 100-page ***Overview of the FY17 Operating Budget*** for the Council in preparation for its oversight hearings. This informative analysis, which provides more details about various aspects of the proposed budget than can be presented here, is available on the Council's website at

[http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=136&clip\\_id=11383&meta\\_id=105090](http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=136&clip_id=11383&meta_id=105090)

Most of the background information in this brief article comes from that document.

**This summary takes no position on the budget** but simply attempts to highlight some of the information and issues raised by Mr. Farber at his MCCF presentation and in his ***Overview*** document. It also reports on the questions raised by those attending the MCCF meeting.

**Background.** Among the background facts presented in the ***Overview*** are the following:

- Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) **have the largest proposed increase: 6.2%** to support progress reducing class size and the achievement gap as well as pay increases and basic structural costs. The CE reduced the Board of Education's (BOE) initial request from 8.2% to the proposed 6.2%; the CE did not specify which elements of the BOE request he does or does not support.



- The BOE's original request for an 8.2% increase included \$72.3 million (40%) for **compensation adjustments**, \$45.7 million (25%) for **reducing the achievement gap and class size**, and \$38.7 million (21%) for **health benefit cost increases**.
- **Increases for County Government, Montgomery College, and M-NCPPC (Parks and Planning Commission) are smaller, in the 2% range**, but support targeted improvements for libraries, police, and other key functions.
- **70% of tax supported expenditures go to MCPS, Public Safety, and Debt Service.** (See page 10 of the *Overview* for the percentage allocated to each of the 12 components of the budget).
- **Maintenance of Effort (MOE)** is a state law that requires every local school district to spend at least as much per student as they did the previous year in order to receive additional state aid. **Any increase in funding in a given year must be maintained in subsequent years.** Under the law, if a county cannot meet the requirement, even in a deep recession, and cannot obtain a waiver, the Comptroller must intercept the State's normal distribution of the county's income tax revenue and redirect it to the school board. The proposed FY17 budget for MCPS includes **\$89.3 million above what would be required under this law, based on FY16 tax supported expenditures.** This increase would have to be maintained in subsequent years.
- **Tax increase.** Because of favorable actions in the so-called "Wynne" court case, which extend the time period over which the County must refund improperly collected taxes, the CE has reduced his original proposed tax increase from 3.9 cents to 2.1 cents. Therefore, according to the CE, the average increase for residential property owners would be \$18.67 per month. **This would result in an average increase of \$224 per owner per year.**
- As noted above, such tax increases must be approved by all nine members of the County Council.

**Questions.** Members of the MCCF raised a number of questions, in particular:

- Why does so much of the proposed increase for MCPS go to **compensation adjustment** when increases in the private sector (according to some) are so low and Social Security will not have a COLA increase?
- Why are **health care benefits** so generous for MCPS compared to other government employees? From the Farber *Overview*: "Until FY15, MCPS employees paid 5% of health care premiums (for HMOs) or 10% (for other providers), while County Government employees pay 20% or 25%. (Federal employees pay on average 28%.) The share for MCPS employees rose to 8% or 13% in FY15 and rose again to 12% or 17% in FY16 (with the opportunity for offsets that would reduce the share to 10% or 15%). If MCPS' premium split were the same as County Government's, savings on an annualized basis could be in the range of \$24 million."
- Is there any way that the **burden of the MOE** can be reduced and made more flexible? [Speakers noted that all current members of the County delegation voted for the MOE when it was adopted.]
- How will the proposed expenditures help to reduce the **achievement gap**?
- How likely are the Purple Line and the proposed Bus Rapid Transit systems to generate **more jobs that will pay higher wages** and therefore generate more tax revenue?



*Can't we mail this Rock Creek trash someplace?*

### Kensington Auto Show

“Since I was 15 I’ve had a passion for cars. I’ve been in this business for 40 years now, and I still have that passion. But it’s not just about the cars. For me it’s about the people you meet...they are unbelievable. Sure there are drivers and auto mechanics but also doctors and lawyers and CEOs – just people who love cars...all kinds of cars.” So says Mario Bruno, the originator and sponsor of the Kensington Auto Show, which held its third annual event in April of this year. Mr. Bruno is the owner of the Kensington Service Center, which he bought in 2014 from Bob Orr, the previous owner of 36 years.

The Service Center is at the corner of Howard and Armory Avenues, at the start of Kensington’s famed Antique Row, and the ideal spot, as Mr. Bruno realized, for an auto show that featured some grand old cars. Even for those of us who may not be particular aficionados of cars, who can resist the look of a 1936 Woody, or not appreciate a 1930 Ford Model A whose restorer shows it with the window tray that was used at drive-ins before there were McDonalds? How many of us may have learned to drive in a ’57 Chevy, one of the first cars to have “cool” fins? And if you are looking for something spiffier or more modern, how about a 1960 Alfa Romeo?



*1936 Woody*

Mr. Bruno proposed the idea of the auto show in 2014. The Town granted him permission to use the Town Hall area but it soon became apparent that interest was high and the Town authorized the use of Mitchell street as well. The weather was just right for that first show – it rained all around Kensington that day but not on Kensington itself. There were 50 cars and about 500 people. According to Mr. Bruno the week after the show the Town called him to talk about the next year’s show using all of Howard

Street. That one expanded to 160 cars, cycles, and trucks. Despite the cold weather, this year’s show expanded to approximately 180 cars, cycles, and trucks, along with three bands, Super Heroes (for the kids), and lots of food trucks set up in the train station parking lot.



*1930 Model A Ford with drive-in tray*

A native of this area (he grew up on Underwood Street in Chevy Chase), Mr. Bruno sometimes wonders if he should have kept his interest in cars as just a hobby and gone out instead to make more money. However, after further reflection he says “...those 40 years I’ve been in this business, I wouldn’t trade for anything. It has been that good and that much fun.” He clearly still has the passion.



*'57 Chevy with fins*





*Jonquils in the pond  
Jean Pettit Wirsching on Saul*



*Same pond last winter  
Jean Pettit Wirsching on Saul*

#### **PRA Executive Committee**

##### ***Officers***

President	Kira Lueders	301-564-0263	kklarl@yahoo.com
Vice President (Acting)	Jeffrey Griffith	301-633-4512	jeff@jandjgriffith.com
Secretary	Judith Dighe	301-493-8867	judithdighe@verizon.net
Treasurer	Gerald Sharp	301-332-9887	gbs2001@yahoo.com

##### ***Standing Committee Chairs***

Beautification	Gail Condrey	301-564-5692	gaildalferes@yahoo.com
Block Captain	Kira Lueders	301-564-0263	kklarl@yahoo.com
Membership	(Vacant)		
Welcoming	Randa Mostehy	301-922-7490	rmostehy@yahoo.com
Listserv Admin	Chris Dewey		cdpwd@yahoo.com
Webmaster	Alex Clark		aclark@aclark.net

Civic Liaison	Bailey Condrey	301-564-5692	condreybailey@gmail.com
Past President	Bailey Condrey	301-564-5692	condreybailey@gmail.com

**Parkwood Residents Association – 2016 Membership/Renewal Application**

The PRA newsletter, except for one issue a year, is delivered electronically. Please check below if you need a copy mailed to you.

\_\_\_\_ Yes, please mail me a copy of each newsletter

This year the PRA plans to make available on our website and listserv a list of PRA members who have paid their dues. In past years, many members have forgotten if they paid or not, and this will give people a way to look it up. We will just list names—no street addresses or email addresses. Please check below if you do not want your name included on the list and prefer to be listed as anonymous.

\_\_\_\_ No, please do not include my name in the list of paid up members

Please print your contact information here:

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

.....

Are you a member of the PRA email listserv (circle one): yes | no

Information on how to join is available here: [www.parkwoodresidents.org](http://www.parkwoodresidents.org)

The PRA is also on Facebook: [facebook.com/groups/parkwood.residents.association](https://facebook.com/groups/parkwood.residents.association)

***Enclosed:***

\_\_\_\_ Annual membership dues \$10

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

**Please make your check payable to: *PRA or Parkwood Residents Association* and mail it to this address:**

Kira Lueders, PRA President  
10112 Wildwood Rd  
Kensington, MD 20895

You can also pay using our Paypal account at <http://parkwoodresidents.org/>