

Parkwood

Residents Association Newsletter, Spring 2017

The next meeting of the PRA will be held on Monday, June 5 at 7:30 p.m.
Kensington Parkwood Elementary School Media Center
Topic: Environmentally Sound Landscaping-Tips from an Expert

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Steve Piacente interviews author Roye Okupe at the Kensington Day of the Book Festival

Spring Meeting: Environmentally Sound Landscaping

Many homes in Parkwood have undergone a variety of upgrades in recent years. A walk around our community shows that this trend is ongoing and appears likely to continue for some time. Most of the enhancements have been attractive and have generally improved the appearance of our neighborhood. Last spring we had an informative and well received presentation about the changes and upgrades to houses over the past several decades, with useful suggestions from our speakers about how to have a successful home renovation project. This spring we look outside the house at patios, walkways, gardens, and native plants and flowers, with the same intent – to learn how to do attractive and environmentally sound landscaping. See the President's Letter on the next page for more details.

Also, we will have brief updates on stump removal and on the status of our recommendations approved at the winter meeting regarding traffic management in our area. The minutes of that meeting are on page 15.

President's Letter, Kira Lueders

Our next meeting on June 5th has a very important theme for this time of year when many of us are starting to work in our gardens again. To provide inspiration and information, we have invited Pat Newman an expert gardener and resident of Parkwood to be our speaker. We have also asked several residents to share their experiences.



Living so close to Rock Creek Park, we occupy a special place as part of a larger ecosystem that depends on us to practice ecologically friendly gardening. Fortunately, there is now more emphasis on the impact each person has on the environment. We are planting more native species to reduce the need for water and fertilizer. We're using rain barrels to collect rainwater, practicing organic gardening, and reducing our use of herbicides and pesticides to provide a safe habitat for beneficial insects such as butterflies and bees. Some have installed rain gardens to create ground permeable to runoff to prevent overwhelming the watershed. Rain gardens create an environment in which many native plants thrive, and the plants in turn attract welcome visitors such as hummingbirds. A garden consisting of just an expanse of grass usually leads to the need to apply fertilizer to encourage growth, lots of water to keep it growing, herbicide to kill the weeds and pesticide to kill the bugs, and these chemicals also wash into Rock Creek.

If this sounds like something you've read in a letter from me before, you're right. I wrote a similar letter for our Spring 2015 newsletter when we were considering how we can contribute to the protection of Rock Creek, and the wider watershed into which it feeds. The creek still needs our help. I feel strongly that there is no harm in repeating these ideas, and hope more residents will start to think of their gardens as habitats that serve both nature and people. My garden is a Certified Wildlife Habitat, as any garden can be if it provides food, water, cover, and a place to raise young. In mine I have bird feeders, bird baths that I fill from my rain barrel, lots of bushes and some brush piles for cover, and plants that provide nectar and seeds. Come to the meeting and hear about how to create a nature friendly place, and how to have a beautiful garden while you reduce the effort you have to put into it by using native plants.



The Maryland Native Plant Society publishes the booklet *Landscaping with Native Plants* (front and back covers shown on this page); available free for download or \$2.00 for purchase. See this [link](#).

Letters to the Editor

We welcome comments, suggestions, and criticisms you want to share about any of the articles that appear in the PRA newsletter. Before publishing them here the editor will confirm with you that you intended them to be made public. Other comments intended only for the editor are also welcome. The editor's email is jeff@jandjgriffith.com; home mail 4502 Saul Road, Kensington, MD 20895.

Regarding the article about the KVFD in the Fall 2016 Newsletter

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for doing a wonderful job with the newsletter. I really enjoyed reading the article about Station 5. Our son, who is now 7 years-old, used to be obsessed with fire trucks and we have made a couple of impromptu stops at Station 5 and have never been turned away. Thank you for this great story that helps us better understand and appreciate the work professional and volunteer firefighters and EMTs do everyday.

Uyen V.

Feature Article: The Kensington Day of the Book Festival

Jeff Griffith, editor

The book as literature The book as art * The book as music*

The world of books is alive and well in Kensington -- books in all shapes and sizes, in different genres, on scores of topics – historical works, spy novels, romance novels, kids’ stories, self-help guides, and cook books (with live demonstrations). The Kensington Day of the Book festival reflects this engaging diversity.

On a sunny day this past April, Howard Avenue was filled with authors’ booths, poetry readings, live entertainment for kids, interviews with special guests, and bands, all reflecting the literary and cultural vibrancy of our community. Bands at a literary festival? Yes. Remember that Bob Dylan received the Nobel Prize for literature in 2017.



Elisenda Sola-Sole

First, a little history. Kensington’s festival is part of the International Day of the Book established by UNESCO in 1995. The celebration draws its inspiration from a Catalan tradition, the Festival of the Rose. Legend has it that Saint George, Patron Saint of Catalonia (Spain) and international knight-errant, slew a dragon about to devour a beautiful Catalan princess. From the dragon’s blood sprouted a rosebush, from which the hero plucked the prettiest rose for the princess. Hence the traditional Rose Festival celebrated in Barcelona since the Middle Ages to honor chivalry and love.

In 1923, this lover’s “festa” became even more poetic when it merged with “el dia del libre”, or The Day of the Book, to mark the nearly simultaneous deaths of Miguel de Cervantes and William Shakespeare, two giants of literary history, on April 23, 1616. In Barcelona, bookstalls and street festivities run the length of the picturesque La Rambla, the old city’s main boulevard. On this day, too, it is traditional to give one’s lover a rose *and* a book.



Author Therese van Houten offers her book *Papa's War: From the London Blitz to the Liberation of Holland*

Begun by Elisenda Sola-Sole (Eli), owner of the Kensington Row Bookshop on Howard Avenue, our book festival retains its international flavor but is clearly a Kensington event. The first festival (2005) had 10 authors and a small crowd of dedicated book lovers. It rained and the festival had to be squeezed inside several shops. But it showed promise, and the second year the mayor suggested closing the street. The town had a small amount of money for events, and Eli and her team of volunteers were able to rent a couple of tents and tables. That second year they had 40 authors and many more visitors. As Eli says “We rented big tents and gave out roses. It was very disorganized, and no one understood the roses, but it was a success!” Since then the Town has continued to be very supportive. It takes care of some of the critical logistics

such as working with the police to close the street and getting a “slow train order” to allow people to cross the tracks more safely to get to the festival. From this small beginning, it has blossomed into a street festival with nearly 100 authors and thousands of visitors.

Eli emphasizes that the festival is about Kensington as well as about books. In addition to the many Kensington volunteers, several organizations participate, including the Noyes Library, the Kensington Park Friends of the Library, and the Kensington Historical society. Gala Artisan Jewelry & Gifts sponsors an annual Gala Craft Show on this same day on Armory Avenue.



Eli August and the Abandoned Buildings Band play on La Rambla Stage

As the festival has grown, it has become more expensive – now it takes about \$25,000 to pay for tents, tables, chairs, children’s programs, bands, and honoraria. According to Liz Brennan, who encourages donors, we are fortunate that a number of our local businesses support the festival financially, including the Kensington Service Center, Anytime Alterations, Frankly...Pizza, McEarneyAssociates, and Servpro. Fitzgerald Auto Malls provided the large banner over Connecticut Avenue. The Pauli Bellet Foundation, a nonprofit organization, whose purpose is to support and promote Catalan culture and literature especially in the Washington DC area, is a primary sponsor. The foundation was started 20 years ago by Eli’s parents.

The festival also maintains links to its Catalan origins in other ways. The Casal Catala, the local Catalan society, has a tent where they give out roses and provide yellow and red balloons, the colors of Catalonia.



Author Andrew Hiller and his book Halo of Mushrooms

This year, trucks carrying tents and tables and chairs started arriving at 5:00 in the morning and hardy volunteers spent the next four hours setting up. By 9:00 the first participants started to arrive – authors, organizers, bands, food trucks, crafts people, and magicians. At 11:00 the festival opened to the public and ran until 4:00. Bands started to play; the magician The Great Zucchini began to entertain children; poets recited their works and story tellers told their tales (remember the earliest “literature” was oral); and Jonathan Bardzik (and friends) began cooking.

On La Rambla stage, Steve Piacente, the Festival’s emcee and himself a published writer, began to interview the first of a half dozen special guest authors, including, to name just a few: Royce Okupe, author of *E.X.O. The Legend of Wale Williams Part One*, a superhero story set in a futuristic Nigeria; Wendy Miller, author with her husband, Gene Cohen, of *Sky Above the Clouds*, a work about how the aging mind can build resilience and continue growth, even during

times of grave illness; and Andrew Gifford, whose book *We All Scream*, tells of the tragic fall of the Gifford's ice cream empire, a Washington mainstay for many years. For a list of all the special guest speakers as well as a list of all the authors; poets; cook book writers; children and young adult authors; and publishers, artists, and vendors, see the Participants tab on the festival website.

<https://dayofthebook.com/tag/participants>

The food trucks, organized by Missy Carr did a brisk business and people wandered along the authors' tables on Howard Avenue scanning the rich array of literary choices and even buying a few.

But the book festival is about much more than a chance to buy some interesting works. If you want a vast array of book choices, one can go to Amazon or Barnes and Noble (at least for a little while longer). The Kensington Book Festival is a smaller and more intimate family friendly affair. It is not rows of bookshelves or block after block of booths. A person can walk from beginning to end in fifteen minutes.

This casual street festival is about meandering. It is about the opportunity to a talk to an author, to learn more about how she or he thinks about writing, how they go about this challenging creative process, and perhaps most interesting, why they do it. Some say that there is a book in everyone. But only a few of us have the time and energy to get it out. Engaging with the people who have done that is an enriching and enlightening experience. Sometimes it is even inspiring. You may not buy a book but you and the author will each have gained something from your conversation. And you will think about some books and some authors a little differently.

If you came this year, there is a chance you will want to come next year. And if you didn't, then be sure to put it on your calendar for 2018. The Sunday closest to April 23. You will be glad you did.



Author Austin Camacho displays some of his many books



The Great Zucchini entertains the kids...



...while others try their hands at literature as art

More Photos of the Day of the Book Festival



All sizes of books...



...and magazines (Jack Waugaman of Rare View Books)



...and lots of books for kids



All kinds of thoughtful activities



Sisters Uke and Friends on the Sweat Shop Porch

Meet Your Neighbors

As we noted in the fall newsletter, Parkwood is a friendly community where people greet each other cordially and often help each other out as best we can. However, we often don't get to know many of our neighbors more extensively. The goal of this column, the third in the series, is to introduce some of the many interesting people in Parkwood. If you know someone whom you think we would all like to know better, tell the editor by email (jeff@jandjgriffith.com) or phone message (301-530-0897).

Erin Haney

How do you go from the plains of Kansas to the dusty roads of Ghana to the bustling city of London and finally land in the quiet suburb of Parkwood, where you help restore our neighborhood's tree canopy?

Meet Erin Haney, a writer, curator and adjunct professor at GW's Corcoran School of Art, mother of Luka (12) and Jasper (9), partner of Markus Goldstein, and fortunately for us, tree expert extraordinaire.

Many will remember that in 2012 Pepco had carried out a major culling and pruning that left us with numerous stumps and many disfigured trees. The purpose was to provide more reliable electrical service by reducing the number of trees and branches that could bring down power lines during storms. Pepco had been under significant pressure from the County and State to ensure better service after several recent heavy storms and a hurricane had left people without power for many days. Their approach was to cut, cut, and cut some more. In fairness, it must be said that power was more reliable after Pepco was done, but the impact on Parkwood's canopy was substantial, and, in many cases, painful to see.



Japanese Pagoda on Crestwood

The Parkwood Residents Association, led by Bailey Condrey, who was president at the time, undertook a project to plant as many new trees as possible. Bailey had been in contact with the county, and while he found out that it did not have the funds to remove the dead stumps, he learned it *was* willing to provide replacement trees and to plant them. But the county wanted to do this on a coordinated, neighborhood basis, and not deal with each homeowner individually. Also, the county would only plant certain trees that would not grow so high that they could interfere with power lines.

It was a job that required considerable knowledge of trees and diplomatic skills essential for working with both residents and the County. Luckily, Erin has both these qualities, and, equally importantly, was willing to lead a group of volunteers who became, in effect, the ad hoc Tree Committee of the Parkwood Residents Association.

How did she come by these skills? Her knowledge of plants and trees came from growing up on the plains of Kansas. Her grandparents and uncles were farmers, and her grandma had a huge kitchen garden from which she fed her family. Basements were stocked with jars of green beans, tomatoes, rhubarb, and peaches. And her hometown of Wichita was filled with enormous old trees - oaks, willows, cottonwoods -- in sharp contrast to the broad hills and prairies that surround the cities and towns.

For her, trees were considered a sign of civilization and shelter. But they were always at risk because of the tornadoes that Kansas often experiences. In Erin's own words, "...we were always thinking of how the land was bigger and stronger than we were, but we helped it along—planting rows of trees in shelterbelts edging the fields of wheat, planting trees in the cities. It's devastating to see so much blown away, and so you quickly rebuild. Trees are an essential part of that."

Growing up in Wichita was quite different socially and economically then. "We weren't so segregated then as we seem to be today. Whatever your background, schools brought people together, we all intermingled in a way which seems almost impossible now. At the same time, there were so many communities, and I was drawn to the things so distinct from my own family--the Lebanese cafes, the Amish farms and workshops, all of the Mexican little family-run joints...I had lots of classmates who had recently come from Vietnam, Cambodia, Russia. The people who I gravitated to were interested in talking across those divides...we shared a great curiosity about the world."

"My favorite people were often artists--photographers, painters, designers. One photography teacher was from Japan, and she and other teachers lured us into conversations about art and politics--they were expansive, in touch with other places."



Okame Cherry on Parkwood Dr. between Delmont and Wildwood taken in Oct. 2016. To see how much it has grown recently see the picture of this same tree, lower left corner of this page.



Same Okame Cherry on this page (upper right) taken seven months later in May 2017

After high school Erin attended Macalester College in Minnesota. For a small Midwestern college, it was (and is) a surprisingly international place. Kofi Annan, former head of the UN, is among its alumni. After her friends took jobs abroad, she focused on moving to west Africa, a place she'd studied at length, and was encouraged by her mentors and friends to make the move.

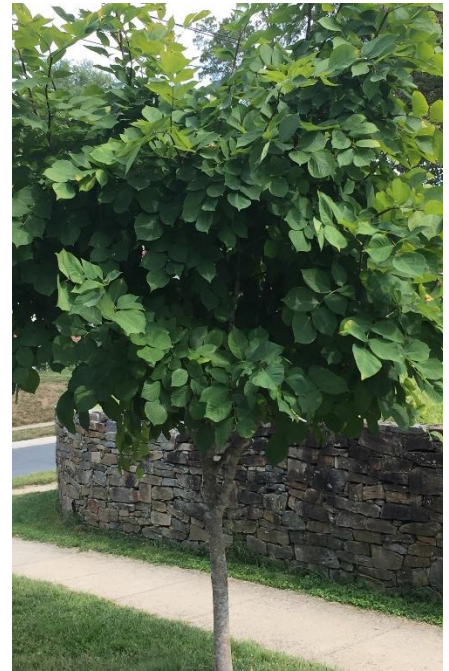
Erin worked multiple jobs at a time, saving every penny she could, and moved to Accra in Ghana for the year. "I soaked up the stories people were telling. I loved learning Ghanaian recipes, like plantain fritters with chili peppers. I lived down the street from Paa Joe's, where they make coffins in extraordinary shapes like a cocoa pod. Browsed the bookstores, went to the famous funeral parties, made lots of friends." She was intrigued by the urbanity of Accra, its cosmopolitan roots, its artists and photographers.

She also met her future partner, Markus, on a dusty road around Legon, the university in Accra. "We were walking with our friends

who introduced us, and we kept running into each other...he was fun to be around. We realized how unlikely it was that we found each other there – guy from New York meets girl from Kansas. We just got lucky.”

They moved to London for four years, where Markus taught at the London School of Economics and Erin completed her doctoral studies at the University of London. They lived in a building with eight flats; half were private and half were Council owned, and so, like much of London, their neighbors came from different countries and different economic circumstances. The local shops, markets and pubs reflected this diversity, and Erin and Markus found it a fascinating place to live.

In 2004 they came to Washington, DC -- Markus with the World Bank and Erin for a post-doctoral fellowship at the Smithsonian. When it became clear they were going to be here for a while, they bought a house in Parkwood, drawn by the schools and Rock Creek Park. Erin also appreciates having a big garden, especially now that her kids are old enough to help; she welcomes visitors to the corner of Thornwood and Franklin anytime. In addition to teaching in the Corcoran’s MA program, she is a consulting curator for the Smithsonian, FotoDC, and a Research Fellow with the University of Johannesburg, and is working on a second book.



Yellowwood on Parkwood Dr. at the intersection of Parkwood Dr. and Everett

While she likes living in Parkwood very much, Erin admits that she does miss the variegation of London, and the senses of community Accra offered. This summer they will take Luka and Jasper there for the first time to meet up with many dear old friends. But they will return, which is good news for both the trees and the people of Parkwood.

About those trees

The tree committee [led by Erin, and including Gail Dalferes, Bailey Condrey, Kathy Byars, Jan Rothman, Pat Newman, and Jeff Griffith] worked with the County and with Parkwood residents to plant over 80 new trees. Not all of them survived, but we have pictures taken last Fall of almost 60 of them. Just a few of them could be shown in this edition of the newsletter. Eventually the young trees that Erin and her committee worked to get planted in Parkwood in 2014-15 will form part of our green heritage.



Persian Parrotia on Parkwood Dr. between Franklin and Wildwood

Parkwood's Tree Canopy

What the tree committee did was to help ensure that our canopy will continue to be there in the future. And to remind you of the beauty of our canopy and some of our majestic trees, we have included the pictures below.



Tree canopy on Oldfield



Tree canopy on Saul



Some lovely tall trees on Roxbury near the intersection with Saul.



A beautiful (and shorter tree that will not reach power lines) on Saul near Cedar.

Can you find these trees?

This is a great time of the year to see some of the beautiful trees in Parkwood. We included the street name for each of the pictures above to encourage you to take a walk and see how many you can find. They are all located on the county right of way, that is, along the street. And if you see some other trees that you think are especially lovely, take pictures and send them to the editor. We will put them in next fall's newsletter.

(Jeff Griffith, editor: email: jeff@jandjgriffith.com or mail to 4502 Saul Road, Kensington, MD 20895)

*There is also good news about **new trees**. The county now has programs for individual homeowners to plant their own shade trees and street trees. The county will plant shade trees for free; it will also plant street trees, but these take much longer. See this [link](#).*

*And about those **stumps**: The county does have a program for the removal of stumps along the street, but because of funding, it will take about four years for the county to get to yours. First, however, you need a “stump ticket”. You can get one by calling the county at 311 and telling them you want to have a stump removed. It is possible that if Pepco or the county removed your tree, even several years ago, there may already be a stump ticket for it. To help clarify the status of stumps and stump tickets in Parkwood, the county has asked us to survey all current stumps and to provide them with a list. They will check their records and get back to us (the PRA Executive Committee) about which stumps already have removal tickets and which stumps need one. We will share this information with everyone via email and the listserv.*

Political Notes

This is a brief and non-partisan report on some of the developments that may affect Parkwood residents. It will appear periodically in the newsletter as events warrant. Comments from readers are welcome.

Leggett vetoes minimum wage

Citing potential harm to Montgomery County’s economy and its ability to compete for jobs in the Washington region, Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett vetoed legislation in January that would have made the county the first jurisdiction in Maryland to require a \$15 minimum wage.

“I remain concerned . . . about the competitive disadvantage [the bill] would put the County in compared to our neighboring jurisdictions,” Leggett said in a letter to Council President Roger Berliner (D-Potomac-Bethesda).

The only locality that has adopted a \$15 minimum is the District of Columbia, which will require employers to pay that wage by 2020.

Leggett left the door open to considering a revised bill, contingent on a study of the economic impact of a \$15 minimum wage on the county’s public, private, and nonprofit sectors. His other conditions for signing a revised bill include extending the wage hike’s phase-in to 2022 — two years after the District will begin requiring a minimum of \$15 an hour — and including an exemption for small business and youth workers.

County budget

Two useful sources about the proposed FY18 budget for the county are the County Executive’s FY18 [Recommended Budget Briefing](#) and the [council’s guide to the budget](#), including quotes from all nine members, published on May18 after the council reached preliminary unanimous agreement. It contains highlights by departments, a link to the approved list of community grants approved by the Council and a link to its final list of approved reconciliation items found in the County Council budget agreement FY2018.

Three items of note to many in Parkwood:

- No tax increase this year
- Schools are funded above the state minimum
- More funding for libraries, which will allow our Kensington Park branch to stay open more hours.

The County Council is scheduled to formally adopt the budget on May 25. It will go into effect July 1.

Environmentalist's Corner

Offshore Wind Turbines Approved

[The following is a summary of reports in the Washington Post by both Post reporters and AP reporters. Links to the full stories are included in the text.]

The Maryland Public Service Commission has approved plans for the nation's largest offshore wind projects to be built by US Wind of Baltimore and Skipjack Offshore Energy, a subsidiary of Deepwater Wind of Providence, R.I. Deepwater has built the only other offshore wind farm in the U.S., consisting of five turbines with a 30-megawatt capacity currently operating near Block Island off the coast of Rhode Island. The Maryland projects still need to go through the Federal permitted approval process, expected to begin in December.



Five wind turbines off Block Island, RI

According to the [AP](#) story carried by the Washington Post, US Wind's proposal is to build 62 turbines between 12 and 15 nautical miles offshore to generate 248 megawatts. Skipjack's plan is for 15 turbines between 17 and 21 miles offshore to produce 120 megawatts. A ton of coal produces roughly 2 megawatts of power for one hour, and according to the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#), a typical 500 megawatt, coal-fired power plant burns 1.4 million tons of coal a year.

The commission says the impact on utility bills is expected to be less than \$1.40 a month for residential customers and less than 1.4 percent on the annual bills of commercial and industrial customers, according to the commission's independent consultant, Levitan & Associates.

US Wind's project is expected to be operational in early 2020; Skipjack estimates that its project will become operational by 2022.

According to the [Post](#), officials of Ocean City have expressed concerns that the turbines be as small as possible and as far from shore as possible.

Ban on Fracking on Maryland Made Permanent

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking as it is more popularly known, is a process that involves injecting water, sand and chemicals deep into the ground at high pressure to break up rock and release natural gas. Advocates say the practice provides a cleaner energy source than coal, but opponents have raised concerns about the potential for water contamination, greenhouse-gas emissions and earthquakes.

Maryland had had a two-year ban on fracking, set to expire this year. Some in the legislature had wanted to extend the ban although leaving it time limited, while the safety of the process was being studied further. Others sought to make the ban permanent. Governor Hogan had previously supported fracking if it could be done in such a way that it would not harm Maryland's environment and public health. This spring, however, he decided that it could not be done in a safe enough manner, and so he supported the legislature's proposal to ban fracking permanently.

Residents of Garrett and Allegany counties, which have the greatest potential for fracking in Maryland, were divided over the issue. Some were supportive of the possible economic benefits; others opposed it because of the potential for damage to the environment and the local water supply. The Washington Post opposed the ban, stating in an editorial that “fracking can be performed safely, as long as strong regulations are in place.” Responses from readers to the Post editorial presented alternative arguments.

Montgomery County

Bailey Condrey, former president of the PRA and currently the 2nd Vice President of Montgomery County Civic Federation, follows environmental issues in the county very closely – some even passionately. Despite the positive reports on wind power and fracking above, Bailey has a more pessimistic view of some of the things going on in the county.

His opinion, in his own word: “There isn't much good news on the environmental front. The county continues to spend money on questionable plans to relieve congestion; they provide questionable records on air and water quality; they ask for environmental exemptions for large development projects such as the Purple Line; they have weakened and dragged their feet on the IGCC (International Green Construction Code); they allow MCPS to continually [misrepresent] the safety and cost of synthetic turf; and last, but not least, they want to shove 30-foot cell towers into neighborhoods without due process.”

Bailey will be writing about some of these important issues in forthcoming newsletters. Letters from readers of the newsletter with concurring or opposing points of view are invited.

Schools Update

Information about our school that is of interest to many in Parkwood.

Walter Johnson High School Overcrowding – An Update, Emily Beckman

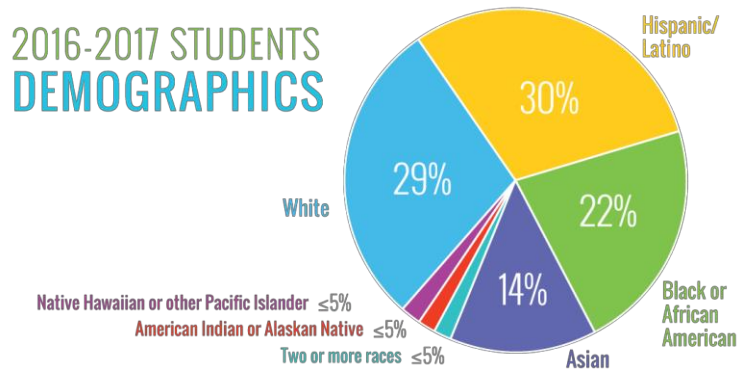
As part of a multi-year effort to address overcrowding at Walter Johnson, the Board of Education voted last fall to begin the planning process for re-opening Woodward High School. This spring, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has been facilitating a Study Group to brainstorm ideas for the re-opening and for effectively using non-traditional facilities to address overcrowding at the high school level. More information on the Study Group can be found by clicking on [MCPS website](#).

The ideas generated by this Study Group will be used to inform the Superintendent’s recommendations for the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) in the fall of 2017. The CIP is a six-year master plan of construction and building improvements for MCPS. The CIP to be introduced next fall will be the FY 2019-2024 CIP. The Superintendent generally prepares a proposed CIP that is made public in October. After the Superintendent proposes the CIP, PTAs and other community groups and individuals provide comments on the proposed CIP to the Board of Education, which may modify the CIP before voting on it and sending it to the County Council. The Council also hears testimony and accepts comments and feedback before voting on the CIP sometime in the February/March 2018 time frame.

The current understanding of the Walter Johnson Cluster is that the absolute **earliest** that Woodward could possibly reopen as a high school would be the fall of 2022. While Walter Johnson is projected to be one of the most overcrowded high schools in the County in the next 6 years, there are not enough students expected within our cluster to fill both Walter Johnson and Woodward. In order to justify re-opening Woodward, Walter Johnson and Woodward will need to serve additional students not currently in the Walter Johnson district.

Student Demographics.

The county currently has 159,000 students. The superintendent has published the chart below that shows the demographics of students in the Montgomery County Public Schools. (Source) As represented by its students, Montgomery County has become very diverse. The chart shows 30% are Hispanic/Latino, 29% White, 22% Black or African American, and 14% Asian. The balance consists of Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and those of Two or more races.



MCPS Budget.

In February, the school board adopted a FY2018 budget of \$2.54B, up 2.6% from 2017. As show in the chart below, the superintendent has earmarked \$11.01 million of this increase for the strategic priorities shown here. For more details see [this flyer](#).

The school budget is part of the County Council budget that is scheduled to be formally adopted on May 25.



Minutes of Parkwood Residents Association Meeting, February 6, 2017

[Although all minutes of the PRA meetings are available on the website (<http://parkwoodresidents.org/>), the most recent minutes are published in the newsletter for the convenience of the members.]

The meeting was called to order by Kira Lueders, president. Thirty-nine persons were present. Participants introduced themselves sharing what street they lived on and how many years they had resided in Parkwood. Many had resided in the neighborhood for 30-40 years and a few since the houses in Parkwood were first built in the 1950's.

PRA Business

Minutes of the October 2016 PRA meeting were approved.

Recommendations Regarding Traffic Management in Parkwood

Jeffrey Griffith and Kira Lueders had represented the PRA at a recent meeting of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) Integration Committee (BIC) where they shared Parkwood's traffic concerns. They reported that the State Highway Administration traffic engineer at the meeting was receptive to their concerns and ideas for improvement and agreed to conduct a new traffic study in the next few months.

Jeffrey and Kira presented five proposals that could improve traffic in the Parkwood area. Each was discussed by participants, who then voted whether to support the proposal. (Four of these proposals were outlined in detail in the winter 2017 PRA Newsletter, posted on the Parkwood web site). Kira introduced the discussion by stating that the PRA executive board would act on the decisions of the group in presenting the proposals to the state or county as appropriate.

Proposal 1. Remove the three pairs of side islands at the intersections of Cedar Lane and Dresden, Cedar Lane and Franklin, and Cedar Lane and Glenridge. Put pedestrian crossing markings on Cedar Lane.

Rationale: the islands have not been shown to improve safety and have the potential for causing accidents by narrowing the road and pushing cars closer to each other.

Discussion: The timing for this is good as Cedar Lane will soon be repaved. Neighboring associations will be consulted on this proposal. Participants were reminded that one of the original reasons for these islands was to enable pedestrians to more easily cross Cedar Lane. Several persons expressed opinions that the islands were not effective for this purpose.

Decision: Participants voted to recommend Proposal 1: Removal of side islands on Cedar Lane.

Proposal 2. Designate the westbound right hand lane of Cedar Lane at Wisconsin Ave. (MD 355) "Right turn only."

Rationale: This would enable cars going north onto MD 355 to turn right on red, thereby reducing backup and waiting/idling. There is a clear line of sight for cars anticipating this turn.

Discussion: Neighboring associations are also interested in making the right lane of westbound Cedar Lane at MD 355 a right-turn dedicated lane. A State of Maryland traffic engineer has offered to do a traffic count at this intersection.

Decision: Participants voted to recommend Proposal # 2, designating the westbound right lane of Cedar Lane at Wisconsin "Right turn only." Two members present voted against this resolution after concerns were voiced about pedestrians crossing MD 355.

Proposal 3. Adjust the size of the traffic islands at the intersection of Beach Drive and MD 355 (at Grosvenor) so that drivers wishing to travel north on MD 355 are not unnecessarily blocked by cars traveling straight across MD 355 onto Grosvenor. Discussion: Because of the prized Linden Oak on the right side of this intersection, space cannot be taken from the grassy area on the right. The only way to ease this bottleneck would be to narrow the center traffic island.

There is significant back-up at this intersection especially during peak travel periods. Cars going straight across MD 355 onto Grosvenor are often unaware that cars behind them are trying to make a right turn on red.

Participants also suggested that signage be improved as some drivers are unaware that they have to be in the second lane from the right to travel

straight across MD 355 onto Grosvenor. A line painted on the roadway could also serve as a reminder for cars not to block cars turning right.

Decision: Participants voted to recommend narrowing the traffic islands to lessen the delay for cars making a right turn onto MD 355 from Beach Drive. They also recommended improved clarity of lane and directional markings at this intersection.

Proposal 4. Change the red/green left-turn arrow on southbound MD 355 at Cedar Lane to a flashing red arrow during non-peak hours. This would permit cars traveling southbound on MD 355 to turn left onto Cedar Lane with fewer delays and idling. The current red/green arrow would remain during peak hours.

Rationale: Cars often idle needlessly waiting for the green arrow during non-peak hours when no traffic impedes a left turn.

Decision: Participants voted to recommend a flashing red arrow for the left turn for cars travelling south on MD 355 during non-peak hours,

Proposal 5. Kira presented a new proposal to change configuration of traffic signals on Cedar Lane and MD 355 so that all lanes of westbound traffic move at once, followed by all lanes of eastbound traffic. This configuration would allow for variations in signal lengths due to differences in morning and evening peak traffic volumes.

Rationale: this would move traffic more efficiently. This discussion was postponed due to time constraints.

Walter Johnson Cluster Position Statement

The Parkwood Residents Association was asked by representatives of the Kensington Parkwood Elementary School PTA to support a Walter Johnson Cluster Position Statement to request that the County plan for land needed for future adequate school facilities for students in the Walter Johnson Cluster (that is all schools feeding into Walter Johnson High School).

Discussion: This proposal had been explained on the PRA list-serve with a unanimous “yes” vote of over 60 respondents.

Decision: PRA membership voted to support the Walter Johnson Cluster Position Statement.

Presentation: Traffic Issues and Options in the Coming Decade in the Washington Region

Mr. Richard Parsons, Vice Chair of the Maryland Suburban Transportation Alliance, used slides to present data showing that traffic will get worse in the coming decade. The regional perspective is that the area’s transportation network is underbuilt, heavily congested, in poor repair and not aligned with regional transportation priorities. All of us in the Washington regional area pay a high cost for congestion which is a major threat to our environment, our pocketbooks, and our health. Mr. Parsons asserted that there are cost effective solutions that could significantly reduce congestion by adding capacity and eliminating chokepoints. The problem has not been poor planning. We just haven’t followed through on good plans.

According to Mr. Parsons, it is a myth to suggest that we should put all our resources into one solution, such as mass transit. We need support for all modes of transportation: roads, highways, Metro, buses, trains, bike-ways, pedestrian walkways, etc. He listed five priorities for the region: 1) Modernize and redesign I-270, adding express toll lanes; 2) Expand the American Legion Bridge, add a new Potomac crossing, and repair the Memorial Bridge; 3) Modernize and redesign the Capital Beltway, adding electronic toll lanes (ETLs) and BRT’s (bus rapid transit); 4) Add suburb-to-suburb transportation links such as the Purple Line and ICC; and 5) Invest in the Metro System.

Mr. Parsons’ provided much data on regional traffic and transportation issues. He agreed to provide his slide presentation for the PRA website.

Treasurers’ Report and 2017 Budget

Gerald Sharp, PRA treasurer, presented the treasurer’s report for 2016 and the proposed budget for 2017. These were voted on and accepted by the membership. A vote was also taken to approve the beautification budget for 2017.

The treasurer’s report shows a balance that could be used for further enhancements to Parkwood. There was a short (due to time constraints) discussion regarding suggestions. There was a suggestion for a portable battery- or solar-powered speed monitoring device (showing “Your Speed Is…”). No action was taken.

Another suggestion was providing additional doggy potty stations (boxes with dog waste bags).

Membership voted to provide two additional stations. Suggested locations for these stations are Westbrook Lane and Parkwood, an entry point to Rock Creek Park, and Franklin and Parkwood. Installing “My Little Library” kiosks, where readers can take a book and leave a book, in the Parkwood area was also suggested. This idea will be further at a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted
Judith Dighe, Secretary

PRA Treasurer’s Report 2017, Gerald Sharp

Paula Flicker, PRA Membership Chair, and I have processed all the checks and PayPal payments for the PRA received to date this year. A total of 306 Parkwood residents have paid their annual \$10 dues and in many cases made additional donations to the PRA Beautification Fund. This is an increase in the number of PRA members renewing this early in the year, and in fact this is a larger number than the total number of paid up members at the end of many years in the past. A total of 325 members paid their dues in 2016, and an average of 284 paid each year in the previous 10 years. We plan to send out a list of paid-up members soon and will omit the names of members wishing to remain anonymous. Total PRA revenues to date this year are \$3060 in dues payments and \$3025 in donations to the Beautification Fund, for a total of \$6085 received so far this year. This strong support of the PRA by our community has allowed us to keep our annual dues at the same nominal \$10 level for over a decade. A total of 39 members paid their dues using the PRA PayPal account, which means that about 11% of our funds are coming in via PayPal now.

Thanks to everyone who has paid their dues and a special thanks to those contributing to the PRA Beautification Fund. If you haven’t paid your dues yet for 2017, please consider doing so. You can either mail Paula Flicker a check made out to PRA along with the form included in this newsletter or use your credit card with the PayPal account that can be accessed through the PRA website at this link: <http://parkwoodresidents.org/>

PRA Executive Committee: Officers and Committee Chairs

President	Kira Lueders	301-564-0263	kklarl@yahoo.com
Vice President	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
Beautification	Gail Condrey	301-564-5692	gaildalferes@yahoo.com
Block Captain	Kira Lueders	301-564-0263	kklarl@yahoo.com
Membership	Paula Flicker	301-897-3869	pftoo@mindspring.com
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

**THIS FORM IS INCLUDED FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE
TO PAY THEIR DUES YET. IF YOU HAVE, THANK YOU.**

Parkwood Residents Association – 2017 Membership/Renewal Application

This year the PRA plans to make available on our listserv a list of PRA members who have paid their dues. In past years, some members have forgotten if they paid or not, and this will give people a way to look it up. We will list names, street addresses, and email addresses. This list will only be distributed on the listserv which is almost limited to Parkwood residents and our representatives. Also it will be in PDF format to make it difficult for anyone to use it as an email distribution list.

If you do not want your name on this list of paid-up members, please check below, and we will list you as anonymous.

_____ Yes, please list me as anonymous in the list of paid up members

Please print contact information for your household 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

The winter issue of the PRA newsletter is distributed to all Parkwood residences. The other copies during the year are delivered to members by email. We also will post all newsletters on the PRA website and distribute them on our listserv. If you cannot receive a copy electronically and would like a printed copy, please check “yes” below, and we will mail you printed copies of the electronic newsletters.

_____ Yes, please mail me a copy of each newsletter (*newsletter mailing is restricted to members who do not have email addresses who are also not on the listserv*)

Enclosed

\$ _____ Annual membership dues \$10 per household; \$ _____ Donation to Beautification Committee (optional)

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

**Paula Flicker
PRA Membership Secretary
10225 Parkwood Ct.
Kensington, MD 20895**

You can also pay using our Paypal account at <http://parkwoodresidents.org/>
The PRA is also on Facebook: facebook.com/groups/parkwood.residents.association