



MOUNT WASHINGTON

MOUNT WASHINGTON IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

2007 Annual Report

President's Message

It's been a busy year for the Mt. Washington Improvement Association (MWIA) and we haven't always taken the time to report on our activities. Instead of a newsletter, this publication will serve as an Annual Report of the MWIA's work in 2007.

This past year, many of our public meetings were devoted to discussions of the proposed extension of the Jones Falls Trail, but that didn't mean that other vital neighborhood concerns were ignored. In this issue you will read updates about the many volunteers who work, often without recognition, to maintain and improve our neighborhood.

Many people mistakenly believe that the MWIA is a charitable organization. In fact, we are a tax exempt 501(c) 4 association, which means that we can participate in lobbying to influence our elected officials on behalf of our membership. As such, we enjoy a great relationship with both City Hall and our Annapolis delegation. This is more important than ever as Baltimore contemplates such big issues as comprehensive rezoning, changes to its tax structure, implementation of the Comprehensive Master Plan, Northwest Master Plan, and Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan. These programs will bring change to our City and our community. How we manage and adjust to these changes will determine the quality of life in Mt. Washington for years to come.

Changes on our borders are already having a huge impact on our community. Irresponsible development in Baltimore County is crowding our streets. The future

of Pimlico Race Track and Pimlico Middle School are unsettled. The next few years will see the rebuilding of Luckman Park, the development at The Wesley, changes at the Village and rebuilding of the Western Run Stream. Make no mistake; the Mt. Washington of 2030 will be different from the neighborhood of 1980. Our mission is to manage that change and make it work for us, rather than ignore it and take our chances.

I think you will be impressed by all the activity you will learn about in this issue and I hope it will inspire you to volunteer. Maybe you'd like to drive for the "Citizens on Patrol" or work with the "Friends of Luckman Park." We need help with our website and newsletter and volunteers to help with transportation or the tennis program. If you have a skill or an interest, we have a need.

Most of all, I hope this issue will inspire those of you who have not joined the MWIA (or attended a meeting) to do so. We mail this newsletter to every home in Mt. Washington, so if you haven't paid your dues consider this a gift from your neighbors who have. Why not return the favor and join today using the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Let your voice be heard, and help Mt. Washington prosper now and into the future.

Mac Nachlas

P.S. Please feel free to contact me with your comments or suggestions at president@mwia.org.

Jones Falls Trail

Planning for an extension of the Jones Falls Trail through Mt. Washington will move forward this year, after a vote by the Board of the MWIA to support a proposed route through the community.

The route would bring the citywide hiking and biking trail into Mt. Washington by way of a pedestrian bridge across Northern Parkway, starting at Greenspring Avenue across the street from Sinai Hospital, and entering the woods south of the new Northwest Park. The Trail would go through the Park, and then head east on W. Rogers Avenue to enter the woods at the Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital. From there, the trail would proceed through the Mt. Washington Village to the Light Rail Station. Ultimately it is expected to continue on to Lake Roland. Details of the proposed trail route can be found at www.mwia.org.

The December 18 vote capped many months of community meetings and discussions about the best location for the Jones Falls Trail. After an initial route was supported in May, the City solicited ideas from the community for alternative locations. The MWIA's Jones Falls Trail Committee held several community meetings, guided walkthroughs of the alternative routes, communitywide mailings, informational websites, and signs posted around the neighborhood. More than 160 residents submitted their opinions to the Trail Committee, the overwhelming majority supporting the idea of

bringing the trail to Mt. Washington.

In the end, the Committee and the MWIA Board reached a consensus that the new proposed route would link important community amenities, such as the Northwest Park, ensure the safest and most pleasant experience for hikers and bikers, and limit the expense to the City.

City officials will continue to meet with neighborhood residents, and will work to submit an application for federal funding in March. About half of the estimated \$4.7 million cost would be borne by the federal government, with the remainder coming from state and local funds. The City also has agreed to construct two small playgrounds at the Pediatric Hospital, one of which will be accessible to children with disabilities. They will be available for use by the community, and the Hospital has agreed to add about a dozen parking spaces to accommodate any increase in visitors for the trail or playgrounds.

The City has estimated that the trail likely would not be built until 2010. If they receive the federal funds, as expected, they will meet with community members to discuss specific preferences about the trail, including ways to minimize environmental impact in the wooded areas.

Thanks to David Conn, the members of the committee, and all the volunteers who worked so hard on this project.

Luckman Park

Friends of Luckman Park (FLP) met with Mary Porter and Valerie McGuire of the Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks on October 11, 2007 to discuss the \$500,000 budgeted for Luckman Park. The money comes from the Capital Improvements Division and according to Ms. Porter, "It is Luckman's turn for big improvements." The meeting was well attended by Mt. Washington, Cheswolde, and Glen neighborhood residents, as well as a representative from Rikki Spector's office. Ms. Porter said that she and Ms. McGuire would meet with others in the Capital Improvements office and report back to FLP in January. Another meeting will be convened when Ms. Porter is ready to present the findings and get more feedback from the community.

A clean up/planting day is planned for spring 2008, as well as "Music in the Park," and other activities throughout the year. Many thanks to Shea Lyda and Rus McLawhorn and all other volunteers who work so hard to improve our parks.

The spring newsletter will distribute to homes in Mt. Washington in May, 2008. If you'd like to submit a story or photo, please email Jill Feinberg, newsletter editor at jbfeinberg@comcast.net or call 410-466-9225.

Tennis Program

The tennis courts at Luckman Park were busy last summer thanks to volunteers Rolf Halden and Chester and Jennifer Frazier who helped organize the annual youth tennis program. This year over 30 kids got to learn and enjoy the game of tennis, thanks to a grant from the U.S. Tennis Association and these committed volunteers. In addition to the long-standing summer program, an additional fall tennis camp was conducted for the first time, drawing some 12 novices to the game. The organizers would like to thank the Baltimore Tennis Patrons for assisting in organizing these activities and in recruiting top-notch coaches for both programs.

Welcome Baskets

Are you new to the neighborhood or do you know someone who is? Board member Sally Staugaitis is a one-woman welcoming committee, preparing and delivering beautiful welcome baskets chock full of homemade treats and community information. Sally also provides wonderful holiday baskets to our local police and fire stations on behalf of the MWIA.

Sally is poised to welcome new families to our community and is prepared for a busy 2008. Contact Sally at (410) 664-2212 when new neighbors move in.

Pimlico

MWIA's Pimlico Committee has been working with the track owners and City Hall to manage the impact that such large events as the Preakness and the Virgin Festival have on the neighborhood. Preakness attendance has been growing and we have been able to get better response from the City for additional police and sanitation services. For Virgin Fest 2007 we got better police coverage, much better response from the City on clean-up, and negotiated a ticket deal for MWIA members so that each household could buy concert tickets for half price. We are in the process of scheduling meetings with Pimlico's new management team about the 2008 events and intend to continue to press for more improvements in operations, communications, and general neighborliness.

As slots legislation moved through the Special Session, our elected representatives consulted regularly with MWIA leadership on legislation that would affect Pimlico and the surrounding neighborhoods. The legislation that eventually passed will put the question of slots to voters in the November election. If approved, no slots will be placed at Pimlico, but funds will come from slots to improve and maintain the track and provide impact funds to surrounding neighborhoods, including Mt. Washington. The MWIA has not taken a position regarding the referendum to bring slots to Maryland. The MWIA will hold meetings between now and September to help our community understand the impact of slots on our community and our state.

The Wesley

In 2005-2006 the MWIA worked with the Wesley Home, the University of Baltimore, and the Department of Parks and Recreation on the landmark deal which preserved the 48-acre UB Fields from development and converted them to a city park.

In 2007, MWIA started working with the Wesley on their redevelopment into a full continuity of care community. Planning is currently on hold as Wesley rearranges its funding; but as planning resumes, MWIA will be actively involved in making sure development is appropriate and in scale for the community.

Excellence in Design Awards

The community enjoyed a special treat last year when Mayor Sheila Dixon attended the June annual meeting and helped present the "Excellence in Design Awards." Each year MWIA recruits a panel of local architects and landscapers to help honor those neighbors who best exemplify all the wonderful work being done to upgrade homes in our neighborhood. Two categories of design are considered – architecture and landscape. In 2007 there were 7 entries, all of which deserved recognition and admiration of the neighborhood. The Honor Award (first place) for Architecture went to Laura Laing and Gina Foringer, while the Honor Award for Landscape Design went to Chris O'Neill and Barbara Sattler.

Transportation

Last fall the MWIA Transportation Committee met with new City-Community liaison, Jessica Keller to arrange traffic studies in response to the "Mayor's Committee on Traffic Calming" initiative. With help from community members, the MWIA committee compiled a list of major problem areas and submitted a request for a "Traffic Calming Study" to the Department of Transportation. The request focused on the major arteries that carry traffic through Mt. Washington, Kelly Ave., Rogers Ave., Cross Country Blvd., Smith Ave., and Greenspring Ave. The goal is to slow traffic through these areas, thereby making the neighborhood safer for walkers, cyclists, and automobiles. A secondary goal is to dramatically decrease the use of Mt. Washington thru streets as arteries for commuters living north of Mt. Washington. On January 7, 2008 President Nachlas met with Tony Wallnoffer and Rikki Spector who agreed to prioritize Mt. Washington's request, and to find funding to restore the crossing guard at Mt. Washington Elementary School.

Parking

On several occasions this year, City parking enforcement officers have ticketed cars in Mt. Washington. Offenses such as "parking against the flow" and "parking on the sidewalk" are violations of City code, but have been common practice for years in Mt. Washington.

MWIA arranged for the City to suspend enforcement while we sent out reminders about parking against the flow in the spring newsletter. We will be meeting with the City this month on the "parking on the sidewalk" issue and hope to find an accommodation that satisfies the Department of Parking Enforcement while saving our neighbors from prosecution.

Mt. Washington Village

Our community benefits from proximity to the Mt. Washington Village and our relationship with the Mt. Washington Village Association (MWVA). In 2007, the MWVA kept busy with events, area improvements, new merchants, and community involvement.

Successful events included the 7th Annual Wine, Art, and Jazz Festival and the 2nd Annual Garden and Flower Show. (In 2008, the Garden Show will be on April 26 and the Wine Festival will be held on September 28.) The Village also lobbied City Hall for gateway signage, cleaner gutters and sidewalks, and trash removal. The MWVA supported the Outdoor Classroom at the Mt. Washington Elementary School and participated in discussions about the proposed Jones Falls Trail. The Village welcomed new retail establishments, Bags and the City and Freda's Café (which replaces the Mt. Washington Market). For more information, check out the Village's website: www.mountwashingtonvillage.com.

Membership/Treasurer's Report

Since July 2007, more than 480 Mt. Washington households have submitted their membership dues for FY 2007-08 which started July 1, 2007. Even though our fiscal year runs from July to June, many people choose to pay their dues at the start of the calendar year. If you have not paid your dues since last winter, please consider doing so now. An addressed envelope is enclosed in this mailing for your convenience.

We've been working hard to improve our "back office" operations. In the coming months, we expect to start accepting dues payment by credit card through the mwia.org website. We've computerized our bookkeeping and we have been consolidating our accounts to make management easier and improve return on investments. MWIA has not raised its dues in years, yet the cost of everything else has risen. Postage and printing are our two biggest budget items so we need to seek efficiencies wherever we can.

MWIA separated its books from the Mt. Washington Preservation Trust (MWPT), and while we still make an annual contribution to that organization, we no longer can accept checks on their behalf due to tax rules. MWIA received a special contribution of \$500 from IMP productions (Virgin Fest) in 2007 and made a special contribution of \$5,000 to the "Outdoor Classroom" at the Mt. Washington Elementary School.

Contributions

Strong schools make strong communities and MWIA considers support of the Mt. Washington Elementary School (MWES) one of its most important missions. At the December MWIA meeting, we heard Principal Tom Shepley talk about advances at the school. MWIA Treasurer Eric Seaberg then presented MWIA's annual \$2,000 contribution to the School and the PTO.

In 2007, MWIA also made a special contribution of \$5,000 to help build the new Outdoor Classroom on the school's former playground site. The Outdoor Classroom will feature an outdoor amphitheater, which will be a resource for both the School and the community.

MWIA also makes an annual contribution to the Mt. Washington Preservation Trust to help with the beautification and preservation of our community, and helps fund the "Spirit of Mt. Washington" parade.



The Mt. Washington Improvement Association dues are only \$25. Please join today.

Please support the work of the Mt. Washington Improvement Association and pay your dues today!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email address _____

DUES ARE ONLY \$25 PER HOUSEHOLD.

Enclosed please find my dues payment of \$25

Enclosed please find my dues payment and an additional donation of:
\$25 \$50 \$100 Other _____

I am interested in volunteering with the MWIA

I am interested in joining the Mt. Washington listserv to receive email updates on MWIA activities

Please use the enclosed envelope or send your dues to:
Mt. Washington Improvement Association
P.O. Box 10404
Baltimore, MD 21209

Zoning and Land Use

Real estate prices in Mt. Washington held up fairly well throughout 2007, so pressure for infill development continued to be strong. Craig Mahrle's project to develop homes in the Uffington Rd. wooded area has not received final approval from the City but is proceeding. The Carterdale Rd. project (Potts Property) has been on hold with no movement in 2007. The land use committee has also reviewed proposals for changes at the Mt. Washington Mill where Whole Foods Market will be expanding and the Pediatric Hospital which will be replacing its administrative building (The Chateau) with a new office building on the same site.

Developers are typically asked to have the MWIA review any developments that affect Mt. Washington. While our recommendations are not legally binding, the City Planning department generally gives great weight to our opinion before issuing permits.

Remember that the Historic Architectural Review Committee evaluates changes to properties in the Mt. Washington historic District to maintain the character and integrity of that part of our neighborhood.

Thanks to Peter Garver, Sara Fishman, and all other committee members for their good work.

Public Safety

Mt. Washington has experienced an up tick in petty crime this year, while violent crime remains virtually non-existent. Break-ins to homes and garages increased slightly, as did looting from cars. There have been reports of kids "partying" after hours at Northwest Park and one case of drugs being sold from a van parked in the neighborhood.

MWIA is working with the Northern District Police Department to increase patrols of the area and is restarting the Citizens on Patrol." Police officers say that citizens' patrols are one of the most effective ways to deter casual criminals, even if the patrol does nothing more than make itself visible throughout the neighborhood.

Please consider volunteering for Mt. Washington's Community Patrol. It's easy and takes only a couple of hours per month. If you would like to volunteer for this important, crime prevention program, contact coordinator Karen Brown at mtwashcommpatrol@gmail.com

Northwest Park

The Friends of Northwest Park is a committee dedicated to improving the area while maintaining the open space. The committee received feedback from the community and is now working with the City to implement many of the ideas. Significant brush was removed from the upper fields and the lower fields were aerated and reseeded. The committee will be working with the Mt. Washington Soccer League, the Roland Park Baseball League, and others to create a vibrant and effective Friends of Northwest Park.

Communications

There are over 1,600 households in MWIA and an important mission of MWIA is information sharing with all neighbors. We do this through a variety of communication channels: the newsletter, the listserv (note – not an MWIA-run site, but a good place for news and information), area billboards and posters, flyers, the MWIA email blast, meetings, and the website www.mwia.org. In 2007 we distributed three newsletters, three supplements, and numerous flyers. We held 5 public board meetings, many committee meetings, and open meetings to discuss the Jones Falls Trail. . If you would like to participate in the Communications team, please contact Jill Feinberg at

Events

MWIA sponsored three fun community events in 2007. The Annual Picnic was held in June at Luckman Park, featuring burgers, pot-luck side dishes, music, and fun for the whole family. On July 4th volunteers Missy Mack and Caroline Tufts coordinated the annual Spirit of Mt. Washington Parade. The event was co-sponsored by the Wesley and Whole Foods. In December we helped the Johns Hopkins Conference Center welcome the holidays with songs, treats, and a magical tree lighting. Over the years these events have become cherished traditions in Mt. Washington. The MWIA is proud to sponsor and publicize these events.

Board of Directors 2007/2008

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President: Mac Nachlas	410-542-8766
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Leslie Sporn-Symonds	410-542-1892
Roberta Strickler	410-367-8666
Sally Staugaitis	410-664-2212
Trent Zivkovich	410-542-5147

February MWIA Open Board Meeting

February 19, 2008, 7:30 p.m.

7:30-9:00 p.m.

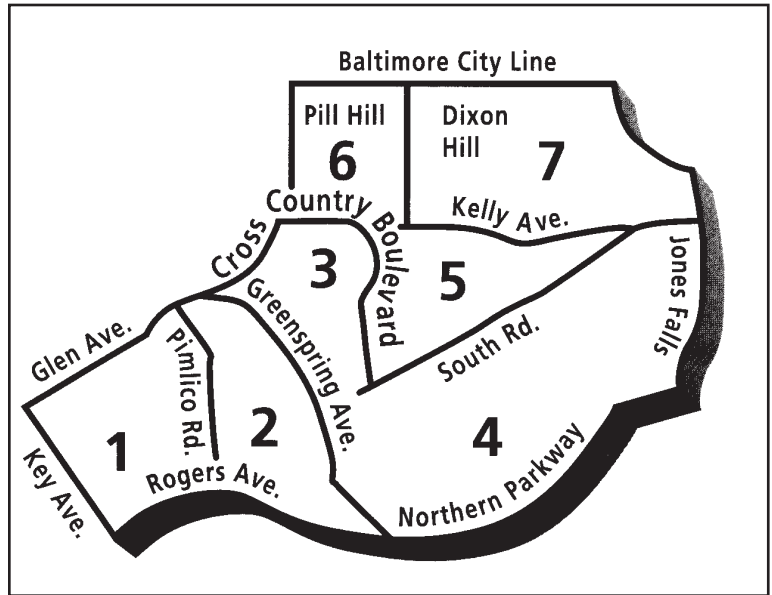
The Wesley Home, Rogers Ave.

A representative from the Baltimore City Police Department will speak about strategies to fight crime in Mt. Washington and help us relaunch our "Citizens on Patrol" effort.

In addition, someone from the Department of Public Works will speak about the City's new single stream recycling program.

Stay Connected

www.mwia.org



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