

The MWIA Today and Tomorrow

By MAC NACHLAS

As I walked my dog down the street this morning I realized that more than half my neighbors did not live here when I moved in 18 years ago. It's like I live in a new neighborhood, even though I never moved. Time sure flies...

The MWIA is kind of like that. When I first started attending open meetings I was in awe of how knowledgeable and effective the board members and officers were. Sometimes I felt like they spoke in code as they referenced acronyms for projects that had been in the works for years. At that time the big issues were the completion of a new "PUD", the "parking district" and redesign of Pimlico Road. Looking back, the PUD (planned unit development) for Pimlico was pretty successful in limiting the impact of racing on the neighborhood, the parking district was a success but is no longer needed and has gone away, and we no longer remember what a mess Pimlico Road was before traffic islands, stop signs and efficient drainage and paving re-made that street.

Since then other issues have come and gone. MWIA has prevented the development of open space and helped create NW

Park. We've debated, and may still realize, a hiking biking trail. We've helped our school expand. We've gotten traffic patterns modified on a number of streets. Numerous zoning requests, liquor licenses, public safety programs, bus and trash issues etc. have come and gone...not to mention picnics, parades and tree lightings.

Over that time the Board has changed, just like the neighbors on my street. As their family situations change, as issues come and go, board members join, contribute and drop off... and the new vitality and new ideas that come with new members is what keeps the organization fun and effective.

Typically, someone first comes to an open MWIA meeting out of curiosity on a specific issue. They listen and ask questions and learn about all the other things MWIA does. If they hear something of interest, they may join the Board and commit to attend board meetings once a month, where they will continue to learn and begin to express their views about the direction of our community. They might join a committee and begin to take an active roll... meeting with the City or other civic organizations occasionally, helping to host the parade or picnic, working on the Newsletter or membership drive. Maybe you have an issue that isn't on the table yet but you want to bring to the neighborhoods attention. This is usually a commitment of only a few hours, but it can have a big impact.

A few folks step up to leadership. Here the time commitment can be more, but the rewards are also greater. Frankly,

MWIA Looking For Board Members

As you have read in Mac's article the MWIA board has lost two officers and will have a number of board openings as some of our long term members need to move on. The two articles on The Chimes reflects how important this organization is as a forum for resolving issues in Mount Washington. The MWIA is one of the most effective neighborhood organizations in the city of Baltimore. We need you to submit your name or someone you think will be an effective board member to our president, Ira Kolmen, or Mac Nachlas. As we need to publish these in our May-June newsletter, we need names in by April 15th. The emails for Ira and Mac are listed in the board member list.

it's very satisfying to know that, even though things sometimes seem to move at a glacial pace, Mt. Washington will be an even greater place to live as years go by.

We are at a time of transition right now. Some of our most stalwart and committed board members are leaving. Vice President Jim Carroll has been a tireless worker for our community, but has resigned to take on some new and exciting challenges and his co-VP, Aaron Meisner has moved away. Our Secretary, Jennifer Mange is taking on some exciting new challenges at home. Other stalwarts like David Conn, who led the effort to expand the MW School and Sally Stugitis who led a successful membership drive are now re-committing to their "real" jobs. Meanwhile, committed members like Jason Korte and Elina Toole have

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Jones Falls Trail & Northwest Master Plan Community Update

Mount Washington residents are invited to attend a community meeting on Tuesday April 24th to view and comment on the latest plans for Phase V of the Jones Falls Trail and the Northwest Park Master Plan. The meeting, which is open to the public, will be held at the Springwell senior living community, at 2211 West Rogers Ave. at 7:00 p.m.

Gennady Schwartz of the Baltimore Department of Recreation & Parks will be on hand to show community members the latest version of plans for the trail, which will extend the Citywide project from Cylburn Arboretum to the Mount Washington light rail station, and eventually to Robert E. Lee Park.

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake last month committed to provide the City's share of funding for Phase V of the trail, the last piece needed to move forward with the estimated \$7 million project. The route includes a planned pedestrian bridge that would cross Northern Parkway at Greenspring Avenue, entering the southwest corner of the Northwest Park. The project is expected to begin in the fall of 2012, with an anticipated completion in the spring of 2014.

As part of the project, the City also will build a "spur" of the Jones Falls Trail to run along the Western Run stream. The spur is planned to start at the "five-way intersection" at Greenspring Avenue, Pimlico Road and Cross Country Boulevard, and head westward along the northern side of Cross Country, running down Kelly Avenue to the Mount Washington Village. For more information about the project visit http://www.baltogreenmap.org/v1/pdf/Jones_Falls_Trail_Discover.pdf.

MWIA Today & Tomorrow, FROM PAGE 1

taken the reigns of their committees and are making impressive progress.

Take a minute and ask yourself if you want to part of the change for the better. Wouldn't you like to have a voice in seeing NW Park become a real park we can be proud of? Wouldn't you like to see more walking paths and better traffic controls to make our neighborhood more "walkable"? Aren't you a good person to help protect our open spaces and neighborhood character as the new City zoning code takes effect? Wouldn't it be fun to be a "Parade Diva"? Most importantly, isn't it important for your kids to know that Mom and Dad don't just talk about volunteerism and service to community... THEY DO THEIR PART.

The MWIA has been around in different forms for over 125 years. At it's founding in 1885, the stated mission was "to secure better roads, better lighting, better drainage, better police protection and other public conveniences in our village." Aren't those still our goals?

Please consider volunteering to serve on the Board of the MWIA. Talk to Ira (our President) or myself... or any Board member. People choose to serve for lots of different reasons... but in the end, we all benefit from the work of those who came before us and the work we are doing today.

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PTO Happenings at the Mount Washington School

By JILL FEINBERG
 Vice President
 Mount Washington School PTO

It's true – a strong neighborhood benefits from a strong school and our community can be proud of the nationally-recognized, Blue Ribbon Mount Washington School. We have exceptional faculty, administration, partners, parents, and kids.

In Mount Washington, the school community truly does partner with the neighborhood. And that's where the Mount Washington School Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) comes in. We organize special events – like the Spaghetti Dinner/Talent Show, the Snow Ball, Movie Night and more – so that the whole community can interact and raise funds for our school.

Many of these events are open to the community. Please join us at an upcoming event and get to know our school community.

Please keep in touch and support the school as you can. To learn more, go to www.mountwashingtonschool.org; to volunteer, send an email to pto@mountwashingtonschool.org; and like us on Facebook at Mt. Washington School PTO.

PTO Events

Phonathon Contact Curt McKnight if you can spend a couple of hours making calls. sheamcknight@msn.com	March 27-28 6:00 - 9:00pm DLA Piper offices
PTO General Meeting Learn about the Birds and the Bees with nationally renowned author Deborah Roffman. Contact Cecilia Meisner with questions. Cecilia_meisner@hotmail.com	April 16 7:00 - 9:00pm MWS Upper Bldg.
Swing into Spring The wonderful annual fundraiser auction is the place to be. Contact Jenn Carter Jones if you can donate an item or a service. jennick@gmail.com	May 12 6:00 - 10:00pm Location – tbd
Sunfest A fun outdoor carnival-type event to end the school year. If you can spend a few hours at the “dunking booth,” email Jessica Shiller at Jessica.shiller@gmail.com	June 8 MWS

Falls Road Construction Update

By MAC NACHLAS

The water main work on Falls Road is going well and should be finished by mid-June according to Kurt Kocher of the Department of Public Works. Mr. Kocher and other representatives of the City met with residents of Mt. Washington, Poplar Hill and the Merchants Association on March 6 to update them on the project.

The project will replace the main water line that services the Falls Road corridor and is intended to prevent future leaks and breaks. The project has been scheduled for at least 18 months, and the contractor presented his plans, and warned of the inevitable traffic disruptions at MWIA meeting twice last year.

The original plan called for much of the work to be done at night to prevent the traffic delays that have tied up Falls Road all winter. Unfortunately, the noise of digging in bedrock generated too many complaints from neighbors, so the bulk of the work had to be done during the day. The contractor reports that they have completed the most difficult section (between Northern Parkway and Smith Ave.) and that the traffic disruptions as they work their way north toward Lake Ave. should not be as bad since the road in this section is wider. There will be minor disruptions in June when the lines are “cut over”, but these will occur at night and should have little impact.

After completion of the water project, Baltimore City Department of Transportation will repave the entire road from 41st Street to the County line. That project should be completed by fall, and while this will cause some more intermittent traffic disruptions during the repaving work, they should not be as severe as those experienced in the last few months.

Mr. Kocher advised that we all stay patient, avoid Falls Road whenever possible, and look forward to years of uninterrupted water service when the project is done.

The Chimes: Resolution

By DAVID CONN

Chimes Maryland has withdrawn its proposal to construct a solar panel array on its Dixon Hill property in Mount Washington.

The decision came in a January 23 meeting with representatives of the Mount Washington Improvement Association, who expressed the community's concerns about the plan for the Chimes's Mount Washington complex on Thornbury Road.

"The Chimes was true to its word, and chose to listen to community concerns in making this decision not to move forward with the original solar array," said MWIA President Ira Kolman. "The Chimes approached MWIA from the start and promised that no project would move forward without community approval."

Chimes CEO Marty Lampner had presented a preliminary plan for a ground-based solar panel array during a December 2011 MWIA meeting. The 658-panel, 35,000 square foot ground-mounted solar array was to be constructed by BITHENERGY of Baltimore. Mr. Lampner said at the December meeting that no plans had been presented to the City and that

Chimes was interested in moving forward only with the approval of the community.

Under a 23-year-old covenant that governs any proposed alterations to the Chimes property, a committee was established to discuss the plans. The committee, according to the covenant, consisted of three members appointed by the Chimes and three by the MWIA. The three members appointed by MWIA President Ira Kolman were Denise Duval (Chairperson), David Nemerson and Paul Levine. The Chimes selected Mr. Lampner, Doug Turnabaugh and David Miller.

The Committee met on January 5 to establish itself and discuss the Chimes proposal. The Mount Washington half of the Committee held a community meeting for affected residents on January 21, at the home of Ms. Duval, with about 20 neighborhood residents. Residents expressed their concerns about the Chimes solar proposal. The discussion included the size and scale of the proposed solar array; the proposed destruction of trees and loss of green space; runoff; aesthetics; historic neighborhood considerations; solar panels in residential neighborhoods generally; zoning ordinance implications; and alter-

Editor's Note:

I've included two articles on the Chimes and the neighborhood process. The first, by David Conn, is more or less an objective summation of events. The second, by David Nemerson, one of three committee members appointed by Ira Kolman to meet with three Chime's representatives, presents more of the controversy and often heated emotions that attended this process. The two articles together give a full picture of what took place.

native energy options.

The Mount Washington committee members reached out to various Baltimore City representatives about the proposed solar array, including Councilwoman Rikki Spector, Planning Director Tom Stosur, Zoning Administrator Jeff Veale, CHAP Director Kathleen Kotarba, and Sustainability Coordinator Beth Strommen. The MWIA members of the Committee also did some research on alternative energy and model zoning codes.

At a full MWIA/Chimes Committee meeting on January 23, 2012, the MWIA representatives presented the results of their research as well as the input gained from the January 21 community meeting. They communicated that the City of Baltimore and the community were opposed to the Chimes' existing proposal because it is inconsistent with the historic and residential nature of the community.

The MWIA members of the Committee reported that the community would be happy to consider a proposal from the Chimes that included roof-mounted solar panels on Curtis Hall and geothermal energy at the site. The Committee discussed ways that the community and the Chimes could work together on alternative energy issues and zoning code revisions.



The Chimes: Controversy

By DAVID NEMERSON

When Marty Lampner, President and CEO of the Chimes, contacted MWIA President Ira Kolman and asked for a few minutes on the agenda at the Association's November open meeting to discuss a "green project" at the Chimes' Dixon Hill campus, few could have predicted the neighborhood-wide controversy that would ensue. Well, after the scores of Listserv posts, the creation of a second dedicated listserv to handle the volume, the community gatherings, the committee meetings, the hurt feelings and the suspicions expressed among neighbors, it bears looking back at how this all unfolded over the past few months.

When Mr. Lampner made his request to the MWIA, his goal was to provide information to the neighborhood about the desire by the Chimes to install a ground-mounted solar panel array on an open field on Dixon Hill. The MWIA accepted Mr. Lampner's request, and circulated the agenda for the meeting in the standard manner for all Association meetings, which is via the Listserv and on the Association's website. At the meeting, Mr. Lampner presented very preliminary information about the general size of the project they were investigating and a possible layout that the solar array might take. In the open discussion that followed, the Chimes made it clear that it did not intend on installing any project that did not have the "support of the community." In the same discussion, some members of the team representing the Chimes, along with some current and former MWIA board members, expressed the belief that the solar project could proceed "as of right" -- that is, without any formal zoning or other public review, mainly because the Chimes had been

formally excluded from the Dixon Hill historic district and activities on its campus are not subject to review by the Architectural Review Committee of the Commission for Historic & Architectural Preservation (CHAP).

It was these two statements, that set the stage for the discord that followed. In retrospect, not only was the Chimes bound by a legal "covenant" to adhere to the spirit of the historic district, but its project would also have triggered a City zoning review irrespective of any restrictions under the covenant. Clearly it was a mistake that the "as of right" opinion was ever expressed. But it was a mistake, not an effort to subvert the appropriate public process. However, in the minds of those that had strong misgivings about the solar project, there it was: this project could go ahead whether they objected or not.

And the only thing seeming to stand in the way was one non-binding declaration that the Chimes would not do the project without the "support of the neighborhood." What did that even mean? Unanimous support? Majority? Support of the immediate Dixon Hill neighborhood or the wider Mt. Washington community? Looking back, it is hardly surprising that the immediate neighbors that would be most impacted by the project, as well as others with their own reservations, would have been less than assured by the situation as it appeared following that first meeting. We now know that the opposition to the project was broad enough to constitute, by anyone's definition, a lack of "community support" and that Mr. Lampner and the Chimes withdrew the plan from consideration, at least in the short term. But the question remains, why, in progressive Mt. Washington, did this ostensibly "green" project raise such opposition and alarm?

As with most things, the devil is in the details. To be sure, many Mt. Washingtonians do support alternative energy. The simple fact is that the Chimes project was the wrong project, in the wrong place, at the wrong time. This project called for the installation of hundreds of large solar panels, mounted on a rather highly visible and cherished open field, in the midst of some of the most gracious historic homes in all of Mt. Washington. That this was a poor fit became especially clear to me when Denise Duval, chair of the small committee (of which I am a member) charged with looking into the project, contacted Beth Strommen, Director of the Baltimore City Office of Sustainability for her opinion. Ms. Strommen expressed that she felt the proposed project was too large and not suitable for an historic, residential neighborhood, and that the City was currently engaged in rewriting the zoning code to specifically address ground-mounted solar arrays (among many, many other topics) and that it would be inappropriate for this project to proceed in advance of the zoning code update.

What lessons can we learn from this issue, that for a time led to such contentiousness and discord among neighbors? Mainly, I think we should all take solace, and pride, in the capacity of our institutions and processes, both formal and informal, to bring issues of neighborhood concern to the fore and provide appropriate public forums where the debate can play out in a measured, respectful and democratic way. For all the heated comments and ironically overwrought calls for everyone to "relax," the fact is, the process worked, neighbors truly listened to neighbors and consensus and understanding emerged in the end. I hope we can all hold on to that.



**April 10
MWIA Open Meeting.**

7:30 PM
Springwell Senior Living
2211 West Rogers Ave

**April 16
MWS PTO General Meeting**

7:00 PM
MWS Upper Building

**April 24
Jones Falls Trail Phase V Meeting**

7:00 PM
Springwell Senior Living
2211 West Rogers Ave

Mount Washington residents are invited to attend a community meeting to view and discuss the latest plans for Phase V of the Jones Falls Trail. The meeting also will be an opportunity to review the latest plans for improvements at the Northwest Park. Gennady Schwartz of the Baltimore Department of Recreation & Parks will be on hand to show community members the latest version of plans for the trail, which will extend the Citywide project from Cylburn Arboretum to the Mount Washington light rail station, and eventually to Robert E. Lee Park.

**May 12
MWS Swing Into Spring**

6:00 PM
MWS fundraising auction
Location TBD

The Mount Washington Swim Club

It's not too early to start thinking about summer!! The Mount Washington Swim Club is currently accepting applications for membership. For information or to add your name to our waiting list, please email Cindy at cbfree@hotmail.com. Don't delay, summer is right around the corner.

Editor's Note: I cannot go on the list serv every issue to ask for calendar events. We will publish an issue for May-June. Please submit calendar events by April 20th. Our publishing schedule next fall will start with the Sep-Oct issue. Calendar submissions for that issue need to be in by Aug 20th. The same time frame for calendar submissions will be true for the Nov-Dec, Mar-Apr, and May-Jun issue next year.

YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

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Councilwoman Rochelle "Rikki" Spector
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rikki.spector@baltimorecity.gov

Senator Lisa Gladden
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lisa.gladden@senate.state.md.us

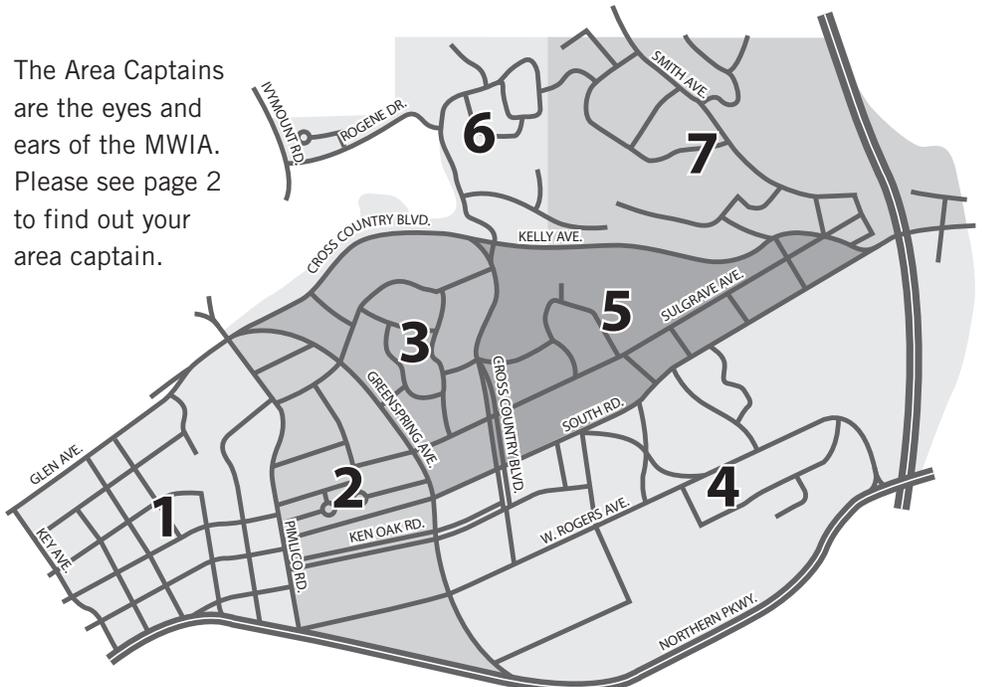
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Delegate Sandy Rosenberg
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Map of Mount Washington

The Area Captains are the eyes and ears of the MWIA. Please see page 2 to find out your area captain.





Got something for the MWIA Newsletter?

The newsletter is published by the Mt. Washington Improvement Association (MWIA) and is mailed to the homes of residents. The newsletter informs the residents about people, activities, and services in Mt. Washington and the actions of the Board of Directors. Please send your news articles or event information for the May/June newsletter, deadline April 20th to: capitano.bryce@comcast.net

877 Members Strong:
Mt. Washington Community Listserv Website

<http://groups.google.com/group/mount-washington>

Join the MWIA Today! Online at MWIA.org or by mail

The Mt. Washington Improvement Association (MWIA) is now easier to join. MWIA memberships will now be based on the calendar year instead of the July to June fiscal year. No more confusion! No more wondering "Did I pay my dues?" And no reason not to become a member!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email address _____

- \$100 – Sponsoring member**
(a leadership donation, and designated on the MWIA website)
- \$40 – Renewing member**
- \$19 – First-time member**
- Enclosed please find my dues payment, plus an additional donation of:
\$25 \$50 \$100 Other _____
- I am interested in volunteering with the MWIA

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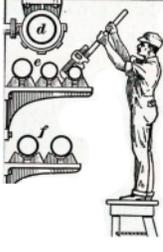
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