

Rock Creek Hills Citizens Association Special Meeting – June 2, 2016

This meeting was scheduled in response to the proposed Salt Barn to be built at Kensington Parkway and the Beltway. RCHCA President Jim Pekar reported that the Montgomery County Planning Board will hold mandatory referral meetings/hearings. The RCHCA Board, per suggestion and a vote of the attendees at the April 12 Spring RCHCA meeting, reached out to land use counsel regarding the Salt Barn. Counsel's advice discouraged litigation and encouraged participation in the mandatory referral process.

The membership approved the minutes of the April 12, 2016, RCHCA meeting.

There are six current and future construction projects impacting our neighborhood.

Salt Barn

Working hydrologist and neighbor Chris Muffels attended the State Highway Administration's (SHA) Town Hall meeting regarding the Salt Barn, which would sit alongside Rock Creek. The site is six acres, including 2.5 acres of impervious surface for truck loading. The project would add 2.5 percent to water loading to our area. Chris reported that the largest source of salt in the creek will be what comes off of Beach Drive after it's been salted. Unless it's raining, the SHA says it is going to "sweep it up and clean it up." We need to make sure they follow best practices, and ensure their safety procedures keep it secure. Large storm water retention ponds will be placed around site to contain runoff. It was suggested that RCH should inquire about truck sounds and possibly advocate for a no-airbrake zone and sound barrier walls. Approximately 40 trucks will use the facility, which will be a large red barn. The Forest Conservation Plan in the mandatory referral process can tell SHA what to do if they cut too many trees.

State Delegate Jeff Waldstreicher attended the meeting and reported on his work with the Salt Barn. He said the SHA focused on sites that they own when deciding on this site. Waldstreicher suggested to the SHA that they swap sites with developers to expand the current site on Howard Avenue instead of using this site. He is encouraging citizen communication with SHA to reach consensus on a larger site for this Salt Barn.

In addition, SHA's published schedule for this project did not include mandatory referral review, which shows that it was not well-thought out. SHA believes the mandatory referral process is not required.

Utility Projects

The gasline replacement project is underway and has caused yard problems along Kensington Parkway. Sewer lines also are being "relined" and sealed along Kingston. WSSC scheduled a public meeting in July to review its upcoming waterline replacement project.

Middle School Construction/MCPS meetings

The biggest issues are that they haven't put up all of the plans on the website as promised. RCHCA asked about "green" plans and lighting plans to minimize light pollution and the reforestation plan. They drilled 640 geothermal system wells, which are very noisy and exceeded the noise ordinance. Kensington Park senior home has said they've been exceeding the ordinance and residents are concerned.

MCPS conducted a boundary study for the BCC Middle School #2. The neighborhood is in favor of socioeconomically balanced Option #1. MCPS will announce its recommendation in October, and the Board of Education will vote on the recommendation in November.

Hydrology

RCHCA neighbor Laura Dennis led efforts to adopt Silver Creek and is scheduling regular cleanups. Several people in the community were concerned about maintenance of the creek and are creating "Friends of Silver Creek" (FOSC) as an advocacy group to do more active maintenance of the creek, including updating the trail along Kingston Road, deal with trees and manage erosion that is damaging the flow of water. . FOSC will be classified as a 501(c) 3 to get grants. The path of the creek is changing due to runoff from construction and erosion. FOSC is partnering with the Kensington Park Senior Center and is going to create a rain garden behind their building. A County grant will fund the project, which will be installed in the fall. They are also concerned about parking along Kensington Parkway and its effect on the creek. Laura will be sending out information about their mission, which also includes collaboration on monitoring with the Town of Kensington from Beach Drive to the Kensington Shopping Center. The State Highway Administration will pay for trails along Kensington Parkway.

Citizens can receive a \$2,500 reimbursement from Montgomery County (lifetime) for putting a rain garden on your property. Personal properties are the biggest source of runoff into the creek. FOSC will educate people about how to do a rain garden.

Replacement of Bridge No. M-PK24 Montgomery County DOT

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation held a meeting on May 31 about its plan to rebuild the bridge over Silver Creek at Beach Drive and Kensington Parkway. The long-term project is slated to start in 2019, between June and August, and the bridge will be closed during construction. It has been on books for 10 years and will go through mandatory referral. Laura Dennis, who attended the meeting, said the bridge has seriously deteriorated since 2011. The project will improve the flow of the water, which should minimize flooding and redo the base of the creek. They are going to create a separate footbridge, 12 feet wide. In addition, they are going to eliminate the right turn lane at Beach and Kensington Parkway (heading south) for safety reasons. Laura asked if they could install a sign designating Rock Creek Hills, as well as a rain garden, to replace the lane. Laura Dennis and John Sonnier were the only citizens in attendance. For full details, go to: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/beachdrivebridge/index.html>

Neighborhood Signs

Attendees passed a motion to form a neighborhood signage committee, which will be in charge of procuring and placing "Rock Creek Hills" signs throughout the neighborhood. Laura Dennis was named the Committee Chair. She will use precedence with the Town of Chevy Chase View and other neighborhoods that have installed signs in the public right-of-way. Potential placement would be on Old Spring/Beach, Kensington Parkway and Saul, Stoneybrook and Kent, and the triangle at Littledale and Haverhill.

Tree Loss

Neighbor John Sonnier said RCH is losing trees at rapid rate. Many of our neighbors have stumps in their yard. Neighbors can contact the County to replace street trees (the County will grind stumps and replace the trees), but said that you may have to repeatedly call to have them replaced. For more information, go to: <http://www3.montgomerycountymd.gov/311/SolutionView.aspx?SolutionId=1-EBMIV>