

## **Rock Creek Hills Citizens Association Meeting – April 12, 2016**

The annual meeting of the Rock Creek Hills Citizens Association commenced, as required by RCHCA bylaws. The RCHCA Board members in attendance included President Jim Pekar, Vice President Hill Carter, Treasurer Maria Marzullo, and Secretary Jill Gallagher.

The minutes of the October 2015 RCHCA meeting were approved by the membership.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Maria Marzullo gave a report on the financial status of the association:

Checking: \$3,800

Savings: \$7,150

Total: \$10,950

She also reported that the association collected the lowest amount of dues in 2015. Normally dues range between \$8,000-9,000.

In answer to a neighbor question regarding litigation over the new middle school being built at Rock Creek Hills Park, Marzullo reported that less than 1% of member dues went to school litigation (A small amount was used to clear the remaining balance owed the attorney). Neighbors raised \$130,000 in donations earmarked for the effort and no dues were used during the litigation.

### **Re-election of RCHCA Officers**

All current Board members agreed to serve another term. A motion to re-elect the Board was approved. The Board also serves as the officers of the RCHCA Covenants, and they were re-elected to these posts as well.

### **Middle School Construction**

Neighbor Rick Bond, AIA, gave an update on construction at the park. He and Board members have been attending monthly onsite meetings with MCPS and their contractors since the discovery of asbestos at the site. The asbestos was in one of the outbuildings of the old school. They found an area of the old school and started to contain it and excavate it, but didn't tell the neighborhood about it. Their failure was not immediately telling the community.

The community demanded the meetings because there was so little information going out. The meetings are meant to 1) to help community understand the process (when trucks are going to be rolling, noise issues) and anticipate what is going on in the process; 2) to enable MCPS to bring up issues of concern about the community; and, 3) to bring any neighbors' issues or questions to the table. This group is there to bring these issues to the table. If you see something, let Jim Pekar, Rick Bond or Hill Carter know so they can address it with MCPS before going to politicians, etc. They will go to others if we aren't getting the answers we want from MCPS.

Construction workers are working six days a week because of the tight schedule (it is supposed to be completed in 15 months), working from 7:00 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. They have to stage trucks offsite until they can begin work at 7 am. The wall that we see along Saul Road is the back foundation wall of the school and the school will be 3 levels above that (4 levels total). The wall "sample" at the front is a sample of the masonry they are going to use. MCPS said they would give a sample of the building walls and another of the retaining walls.

The school bus transportation plan has not been revealed yet because the boundary study has not been finalized.

### **Boundary Study**

The borders of the BCC Cluster will NOT change. All of the kids who go to an elementary school currently in the cluster, will eventually go to BCC. The boundary study will determine which elementary schools will go to the new BCC MS#2 and Westland. Neighbor Laura Dennis has attended all of the boundary meetings. They are looking at which schools and which neighborhoods will attend the schools. At the time of the meeting, there had been three meetings that presented six different options developed by MCPS. The boundary study committee includes two reps from each school, 2 NAACP reps and 2 latin student group reps (26 total). Out of six "options," there was really only one viable option, so the committee asked MCPS to go back and bring new options. A meeting on 4/14 will discuss transportation, IB program, and language immersion programs. By July, a proposal will go to the new superintendent, who will narrow down his recommendation in September. In November, the BOE will make its decision. Afterward, MCPS will choose the principal, who then hires staff. Socioeconomics is the main sticking point right now. MCPS is bound by law to have socioeconomic and racial equity in both schools and it is a huge problem since the east side of the cluster – where the school is being constructed – has the diversity and has to travel the furthest to Westland. Community can attend meetings and PTA reps are being held responsible for sharing information with their school groups. All meetings are held at BCC High School.

### **Pedestrian Safety**

There may be an effort in the near future to look into the possibility of sidewalks by the Dept. of Transportation. The neighborhood may be asked to approve sidewalks for the safety of walkers. Street congestion and streetscape changes are also a concern, which MCPS and the contractors don't want to talk about. There is a lot of uncertainty about this. The DOT doesn't want to consider this until the school is open and it seems they have no plans. The school will open with two classes to start, then all three the next year.

### **WSSC**

Surveying stakes in the neighborhood were put there by WSSC, which is replacing water lines and Wash Gas, which is replacing gas lines. Between Beach Drive and the Beltway, they are surveying for a sidewalk. Neighbors expressed frustration with the contractor for Washington Gas, which has messed up all of their yards. Rick Bond is communicating with Wash Gas and asking for remediation. They won't fix the yards unless you call Wash Gas and threaten to sue. Saul, Calvend, and Kensington Pkwy are being torn up. The neighbors want RCHCA to speak up for the community because they feel they're being treated unfairly.

### **Townhouse Development on Kensington Pkwy**

Houses on Kensington Parkway north of the Beltway overpass will be torn down and replaced with townhomes. Directly on the other side of Kensington Parkway, a salt barn is being planned by the State Highway Administration. It is a hazardous chemical storage and handling facility, containing 10,000 tons of salt, magnesium chloride, diesel fuel, etc. RCHCA has submitted three FOIA requests to SHA regarding this and its effect on the creek that runs alongside the site. Gwen Wright, Director of MoCo Planning Board said SHA needs to go through the mandatory referral process before it begins anything. The responses to the FOIA request include an invoice for the cost of retrieving the materials: \$1,000. There is a requirement for an environmental impact assessment, which they have not done. At a community meeting, SHA said they know they're likely to contaminate the creek. There will be issues of trucks

driving with salt contaminating the creek as well as the facility itself. SHA has said they will have on-site hazardous waste treatment. Audubon and Rock Creek Conservancy said they would be writing letters of opposition, as well as the NCC community. Neighbor Laura Dennis asked if we should form a coalition. The 10,000-ton facility is much larger than the smaller facilities we are used to. A neighbor suggested that park and planning is responsible for leading this fight and needs to hear from citizens – a via letters and calls – or else they are not going to act. A neighbor suggests going to more environmental groups and local press. Wash Post's Donna St. George reported on the story. The question was raised about how many 100-year storms have there been since 2000, since that is the threshold for containing the hazardous chemicals. A neighbor recommends getting a good land use counsel and to send cohesive letters.

Hill Carter presented a motion to authorize RCHCA to follow up with Amy Lindsey and Casey Anderson, Gwen Wright and other appropriate Planning Board individuals and spend up to \$1,500 of the RCHCA's funds for legal advice and possible FOIA requests. The motion was approved.

### **Neighborhood Signage**

Neighbor Laura Dennis reported on her efforts to look into getting signs designating the neighborhood. There is a cost of \$625 for a permit on public right-of-way. If sign is place on private property, it's \$325 for sign permit. She will look into whether RCHCA still has the permit for the sign that used to be on Beach Drive and Kensington Pkwy. Cost estimates come to about \$1,200/sign. There is a possibility that we can get a rock or boulder and get lettering on it. We could put them in triangles and ask if that would still be considered a sign, or if it is a landscaping element. If landscaping, it would be less expensive.

### **May Party**

The annual "Spring Fling" will be held at Kensington Cabin Park on May 15 from 4-7 p.m. The party will include live music and food. Community members are welcome to bring potluck dishes to share. Someone suggested having a table for dues and membership signup and a petition for salt barn..

### **Villages of Kensington**

There was an opening party on Jan. 31 that 80 people attended, including County Executive Ike Leggett and Town of Kensington Mayor Pete Fosselman. The charge for Charter members is \$75. Annual membership is \$350/household (tax deductible). The VOK is partnering with the Jewish Social Service Association to enhance the quality of its services (medical services) and with Kensington Park senior living (using their meeting space and getting info on aging services). They will make a list of vetted services available. They will be producing a bi-monthly newsletter as well.

**[www.villagesofkensingtonmd.org](http://www.villagesofkensingtonmd.org)**.

### **Miscellaneous**

When dogwalkers walk dogs, don't leave bags on people's lawns.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.