

## **Rock Creek Hills Citizens Association Meeting Minutes – October 26, 2015**

RCHCA President Jim Pekar opened the fall meeting and introduced RCHCA officers: Hill Carter, Vice President; Maria Marzullo, Treasurer; Jill Gallagher, Secretary; John Robinson, Past President; and, Vince DeCain, Chair of the Covenants Committee. The attendees approved the minutes of the March 3, 2015, meeting.

### **Treasurer's Report**

RCHCA Treasurer Maria Marzullo reported that the Association treasury's net worth was \$9,400, including \$5,500 in savings. The Association received \$3,000 in dues, which is very low compared to previous years (possibly attributable to not including an envelope in the last mailing). The Association had hoped more people would access the online payment system, but said it would provide envelopes in future mailings and also is considering using PayPal on the website in order to increase membership. The Association has had to dip into its savings to pay everyday expenses, which included \$1,800 for printing the neighborhood directory, \$2,200 for the Mother's Day Picnic, the annual Halloween party, triangle maintenance, and the purchase of a rock at the Old Spring and Elrod triangle (\$7,300 in expenses this year).

John Robinson proposed a resolution to transfer the balance of the litigation fund into the general fund. The resolution was approved.

### **Permanent Closure of Rock Creek Hills Local Park/BCC Middle School #2 Construction**

The closure of the neighborhood's park in September and the construction of a 1,200-student middle school in its place will bring long-term changes to the neighborhood. The staging of stormwater management that is occurring has not shown up in any of the plans, neighbor Jayson Sonnier explained. He said permits can be viewed at Montgomery County Park and Planning. To date, the only permit that has been released is the stormwater plan permit. Construction currently is in Phase 1 of three phases. They have dug temporary sediment control ponds at the bottom of the hill (Saul Road), at the tennis courts and on the fields. The school's foundations and retaining walls will be the next phase. Permanent stormwater management control items will go in during Phase 3.

### **Incorporation?**

If RCH were to incorporate as a "village" – a new entity or annexed as part of an existing entity (a 3<sup>rd</sup> class municipality) – would it have some authority or control over traffic and other issues that arise in the neighborhood due to the new school? The neighborhood currently is part of unincorporated Rock Creek Hills, a voluntary citizens association. Various pros and cons of such an approach were discussed, including the effect on taxes. John Robinson said taxes would go up with a rebate from the state of Maryland for some of the expenses, including snow clearance and garbage pick-up. The neighborhood also would have to pay for traffic enforcement. Jim Pekar asked for a volunteer to head this up, especially someone who understands the permitting system and can decipher the costs/benefits. A neighbor mentioned that the first step would be to figure out what neighbors have to say about this and to talk to neighboring communities such as North Chevy Chase and Chevy Chase View for perspective. The County Council would need to approve such a change as well. Robinson explained it as a two-pronged approach: talk to DOT about parking and traffic concerns, see what the protocols are and compare it to the authority we would have as a low-level municipality. Neighbor Pat Pugliese

was looking into parking enforcement and Hill Carter offered to approach Chevy Chase View for information. Any change in the neighborhood's status would require a referendum from the neighborhood's residents.

### **Neighborhood Signage**

Neighbor Laura Dennis brought up the issue of signage for the RCH in order to add character and promote unity as is done in surrounding neighborhoods (Chevy Chase View, Parkwood, Rock Creek Palisades, and Capitol View). She said she would look into sign options and present them at the next meeting.

### **Intergenerational Villages**

Suzanne Bowler, Vice President of the Villages of Kensington (VoK), distributed brochures and explained the Village's mission to build and sustain an intergenerational network of neighbors in all Kensington communities and improve the quality of life for everyone. Villages President Donna Savage, a resident of Kensington Heights, also attended the meeting. VoK is a volunteer, nonprofit organization.

Villages are based on the principle of "it takes a village" to be able to age in place and/or raise a child with the help of friends and neighbors through volunteer services and partnerships and to reduce social isolation. Our Village would provide services for younger people with raising children and cooking family meals, or people who need help in between young and old. The Village is trying to bridge the gap between generations in RCH and other parts of Kensington. Volunteers will be vetted before they help people. High schoolers can get SSL credit for volunteering for some of these tasks.

A needs assessment survey was sent out via Survey Monkey and 150 people responded. Most were interested in transportation (trips to doctors), shopping, running errands, and picking up children/ taking them to activities. Other interests included referrals for services (medical, handymen, legal), computer assistance, snow shoveling, babysitting, tutoring (partnering with other organizations, incl. Kensington Park retirement community), as well as educational lectures, book clubs, and social experiences. It's an interactive process, Bowler explained: "It's everyone's Village – neighbors helping neighbors."

The Kensington Village is part of a national and local network (Washington Association of Village Exchange) that offers support. (The DC area is one of the most active in the country: there are 23 area "Villages.") The Villages of Kensington Board includes 13 members from diverse backgrounds who meet monthly, and each has a specific task. Their plan is to open for business in Spring 2016. See the website for information and to get in touch with them: [www.villagesofkensingtonmd.org](http://www.villagesofkensingtonmd.org)

### **Miscellaneous**

Chevy Chase View neighbor Kristy Clason addressed to group to solicit support for a "no left turn" onto Franklin Street from southbound Connecticut Avenue.

The meeting adjourned.