

# Your Neighborhood News & Information



OCTOBER 2017

rchca.org

## RCHCA MEMBERSHIP MEETING • TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24 • 7:30 PM GRACE EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL • 9411 CONNECTICUT AVE

The Autumn Meeting of the Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association will include the minutes of the last meeting, the Treasurer's Report, and items listed on Page 2. "We're glad you're our neighbor" yard signs (<<https://goo.gl/MMFFks>>) will be available at the meeting. The cost to the Association was \$9.99; if you'd like one, please bring a check. Please contact any Board member if you know of any other items for the meeting. Only dues-paid members will be able to vote at the meeting. Dues are \$40 per household per year and may be paid online at [www.RCHCA.org](http://www.RCHCA.org), in person by check at the meeting, or by sending a check payable to "RCHCA" to our Treasurer, Maria Marzullo, at 9801 East Bexhill Drive, Kensington, MD 20895. Additional contributions are always welcome and sincerely appreciated.

### President's Message

Dear neighbors,

I'm writing this on the morning of September 23rd. After a challenging week at work, I knew that this sunny Saturday morning would feature happy crowds being cheered on Kensington Parkway as they ran in the Kensington 8k. What I did not know was that this morning would also feature a neighbor stopping by to raise concerns about pedestrian safety, vehicular traffic, and the new school, only to reject my suggestion to join with the Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association in working to address these concerns.

To that neighbor, it seems the Association was just another "they" to complain about – the "they" that reviews proposed fences was like the "they" that built the middle school, or the "they" that runs our local government. Although complaining about those "theys" was fun, and might be a kind of virtue signaling, doing anything to be a part of a solution, to actually help, was apparently not an option to consider. I disagree. The RCHCA isn't another "they"; it's "we".

The Association is how we work together to defend and improve the good things about our neighborhood. And now that the new middle school has opened, the Association is more important than ever, because the Association is how we can work together to reduce the risk to children walking in streets increasingly trafficked by vehicles traveling at excessive speeds. The Montgomery County Departments of Transportation and Parks are responsive to our suggestions, so we have a real opportunity to improve safety for these children (and all road users).

I am grateful to that neighbor for having inadvertently highlighted my gratitude to you! Thank you for being part of, and supporting, the Association. Thank you for reading, writing, contributing, attending, speaking, and voting. Please continue to read, write, contribute, attend, speak, and vote.

And please consider doing something else: Please consider serving on the Board – as mentioned on the next page, a Nominating Committee has been charged with nominating candidates to stand for election at our Winter meeting. (Your Association President, Secretary, and Treasurer, who have been honored to serve for three consecutive terms, providing continuity during the disruptive period of school planning and construction, do not wish to stand for re-election.) Now, at this time of great opportunity to fulfill our ethical obligation to protect children, you have a chance to step up and serve for good.

I hope to see you at our Autumn meeting on October 24.

With warm regards,  
Jim Pekar  
President, RCHCA



The **Halloween Parade & Party** will be on Sunday, Oct. 29. The costume parade begins at the corner of Litledale and Haverhill at 3:30 pm. The party follows from 4-7 pm at 3500 Saul Road, thanks to Sam Statland's generosity. Requested dishes are as follows: A-I, appetizers; J-R, salads and sides; S-Z, desserts. See you there!

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## MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

### School Safety

With the new school open, there are concerns about the safety of students walking to school in roadways increasingly trafficked with vehicles. These concerns will intensify as the school reaches capacity. We will provide an update on possible approaches to enhancing pedestrian safety, and representative from the County Dept. of Transportation plans to attend to provide information and answer questions.

### Permit Parking

Concerns have arisen about the availability of street parking in front of homes close to the new school, which will intensify as the school reaches capacity. As discussed, the County provides a mechanism for residents to request permit parking; see notes on remarks by RCHCA Vice President Hill Carter at <<https://goo.gl/TFgBZa>>. An update will be provided at the meeting.

### Environmental Update

With school construction (almost) finished, we asked the Planning Board and Parks Dept. to restore and stabilize the Silver Creek stream valley, and to improve pedestrian routes on Parks Dept. land. An update will be provided at the meeting.

### Neighborhood Signage Update

Laura Dennis, chair of the neighborhood signage committee, will provide an update on placing "Rock Creek Hills" signs at neighborhood entrances. Potential placement would be on Old Spring/Beach, Kensington Pkwy/Saul, Kensington Pkwy/Beach, Stoneybrook/Kent, and the triangle at Littledale and Haverhill.

### Covenants Update

Shirley and Carlos Domenech reside at 9608 Kensington Parkway. The covenants pertaining to that lot state that "No line fences or walls of any kind shall be erected .... except ... such fences ... as may be approved by the Continental Life Insurance Company, Inc." and "No ... structure of any kind ... shall be constructed... unless, and until, complete plans and specifications... shall first be submitted to and approved by the Continental Life Insurance Company, Inc." (Note that Rock Creek Hills Covenants, Inc., inherited the covenant enforcement

authority of the Continental Life Insurance Company). However, in August 2016, Shirley and Carlos Domenech built a fence, including a (partial) front-yard fence, without submitting the required request for authorization. The absence of front yard fences is a positive aesthetic characteristic of our community. Furthermore, an unauthorized front yard fence could serve as a "slippery slope" precedent leading to the proliferation of many more front yard fences and other violations of the covenants, harming property values. Accordingly, Shirley and Carlos Domenech were repeatedly asked to reconfigure their fence, in order to eliminate the front yard portion. These requests were not productive. Shirley and Carlos Domenech, per their request, were then invited to make a presentation regarding this matter at the most recent (March 2017) general meeting of the RCHCA. Following that meeting, the RCHCA Board, in their capacity as the officers of Rock Creek Covenants, Inc., and consistent with the vote of the membership at the previous (October 2016) general meeting of the RCHCA, referred the matter to counsel. We have asked the court of appropriate jurisdiction to order Shirley and Carlos Domenech to remove their unauthorized fence. An update will be provided at the meeting.

### Nominating Committee

RCHCA Past President John Robinson has agreed to chair a Nominating Committee, whose purpose is to nominate members to stand for election as officers at the Winter meeting (to be held in January or February). RCHCA members Winnie Holbrook, Fern Shepard, and Gary Ditto have volunteered to serve on this committee. We are soliciting additional volunteers to serve on this committee; if you are interested, please inform any Board member. Your Association's President, Secretary, and Treasurer do not wish to stand for re-election.

### Treasurer's Report

As of publication the RCHCA checking account has a balance of \$2,989.17 and the RCHCA savings account a balance of \$6,109.75. Thus total funds for operations are \$9,098.92. All invoices are paid.

9411 Connecticut Ave.

Grace Episcopal Day School

7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 24

**Autumn Meeting**



Kensington, MD 20895

9711 E. Bexhill Drive

Citizens' Association

Rock Creek Hills

**RCHCA**