

## **RCHCA Autumn Meeting Minutes – November 27, 2018**

RCHCA President Jim Pekar began the meeting by introducing the Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation's Khursheed Bilgrami and thanking the many neighbors who have volunteered their time and talents to the neighborhood: Sam Hoxie (RCHCA website and directory); Mike Baker (RCHCA net listserv); Laura Dennis (environment/Silver Creek adoption); Anne Levin (RCH representative for Silver Creek MS PTSA Social Cmte); Jed Dinger (neighborhood sign design); Suzanne Mintz, Kathy Morgan and Erica Weiss (RCH Welcoming Cmte); Fern Shephard, Winnie Holbrooke, Gary Ditto (Nominating Cmte); and, Vince DeCain (former Covenants Chair).

A motion to approve the minutes of the Winter 2018 Meeting, held on March 12, 2018, was accepted.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

RCHCA Treasurer Maria Marzullo provided a report on RCH finances. Ms. Marzullo received dues from some neighbors who had already paid for 2018, so she will credit those to next year. The major expense for the year was Covenant Litigation. Expenses for Communications, Insurance, Social Events and Web/Software costs were consistent with past years.

Total in RCH Accounts: \$6,100

Dues collected: \$9,720 (includes 38 households paying twice and dues applied to '19)

### **ELECTIONS**

The election of new RCHCA officers had been postponed from the Winter meeting, when they are usually held. President Jim Pekar announced the nomination of a new slate of members for the RCHCA Board and for the board of RCH Covenants, Inc.: Peter Chatfield (President); Hill Carter (Vice President); John Robinson (Treasurer); Elizabeth and Bill Kingery (Co-Secretaries); and, Jim Pekar (Past-President). A motion to install the slate as officers of RCHCA was made, seconded, and approved; and a motion to install the slate as officers of RCHCI was made, seconded, and approved. The new officers will start immediately and serve through early 2020 (Elizabeth and Bill Kingery will get one vote on the board). Jim Pekar announced that it was his great honor and pleasure to introduce Peter Chatfield as the new president of the RCHCA.

### **TRAFFIC STUDY**

Newly elected RCH President Peter Chatfield spoke about neighbor concerns over sidewalk proposals and processes. There have been traffic concerns since the new middle school was built, and the board welcomes suggestions to improve safety. If neighbors are aware of a place that seems unsafe, please let the board know of your concerns by sending an email to: [peterwchatfield@gmail.com]. The current plan is to first address traffic concerns (traffic calming). Once traffic calming is in place and we see how it works, the issue of sidewalks will then be discussed. Chatfield said RCHCA will conduct a survey of the neighborhood to gauge opinion. In addition, the county has a hearing process that allows individual citizens to voice their opinions. For the sake of the neighborhood, Chatfield emphasized that it is helpful to listen to each other about both real safety concerns and from those who chose the neighborhood because of its lack of sidewalks and park-like aesthetic. He noted that this idea is reflected in the covenants, whereby neighbors inform each other about making changes to their homes before getting work done.

Montgomery County traffic engineer Khursheed Bilgrami addressed the meeting to explain the county's study of RCH traffic, including speeding, cut-through traffic, and concept plans to improve intersection geometry (i.e. traffic triangles). He noted that school children walking on RCH streets is being explored by another section of the county's transportation department. The county acquired data on almost all RCH streets. According to Bilgrami, the State Highway Administration was simultaneously studying area traffic. The study findings can be found on the RCH website: [www.rchca.org](http://www.rchca.org)

**Volume/Cut-thru Traffic:** All of the roads studied have volume requirements for cut-thru traffic. RCH roads, including Saul and Kensington Parkway are primarily residential, so they have a special volume for those types of streets. Data was collected during a 24-hour period at the end of May. The only street that came close to reaching the volume threshold of 400 cars/hour was Kensington Pkwy at 380. Kensington Pkwy already has traffic calming (speed bumps), but if the volume there were to reach 420, for instance, the county would take the next step of tracking license plates and checking addresses. Depending on where the cars reside, they would be considered cut-thru instead of "neighbor" and additional measures could be taken. Bilgrami said they will "keep an eye on it."

**Speed:** The study found that most cars traveled over the speed limit through the neighborhood, but less than the threshold of 7 mph required for traffic calming measures. The only street that would qualify is Kensington Pkwy, but it already has speed humps. People are speeding between the speed humps. The speed hump vertical deflection for the county won't go above 3.5 inches, though it can be higher in other jurisdictions (i.e. Town of Chevy Chase, Takoma Park). Some speed humps can be more "aggressive" if it is not a route frequented by emergency vehicles. Bilgrami proposed curb extensions on Kensington Pkwy - between the speed humps - to choke the traffic, but that would eliminate future bike lanes and make walking more difficult. Narrowing streets makes them less pedestrian friendly. Another option is to add more speed humps. A question was posed about the use of speed cameras. Bilgrami said the police perform an investigation before they will install a camera.

A neighbor questioned the results/validity of the speed study performed at the bottom of Old Spring at Beach. The stop sign – and end of the road – at Old Spring and Beach virtually compels a car to slow down prior to reaching the sign.

A neighbor expressed concern about visibility at the intersection of E. Bexhill and Old Spring, and suggested a stop sign be added on Old Spring. The county was asked to look into cars speeding downhill on Saul toward the school since there is nothing to stop or slow traffic coming toward the school. A neighbor asked for consideration of a crosswalk at Saul and Old Spring. A neighbor mentioned that reporting school busses speeding through the neighborhood to the bus depot could initiate route changes.

**Intersection Geometry/Triangles:** The purpose of changing some of the neighborhood's triangles was to bring them into compliance with modern safety standards. The triangle at Saul and Elrod was studied due to complaints about speed, cut-through traffic and the school. John Robinson pointed out that these triangles are now prohibited by county policy. Bilgrami presented two options, but said he did not like Option 2 containing the roundabout. The options presented for the triangle at Elrod and Old Spring concerned residents because either of them left one of the streets without a stop sign, which could contribute to increased speed on the road without a stop. Bilgrami said, however, that it didn't meet the standards for a stop at a 3-way intersection. Residents expressed support for added traffic calming and/or stop signs in addition to those in the study.

The impending WSSC project in the neighborhood may delay implementation of any of these measures. Bilgrami has a meeting planned with WSSC to discuss phasing of its project to determine if anything can be done that won't be impacted by the WSSC project. Bilgrami said he would report back after his meeting with WSSC

Peter Chatfield said a future "listening" meeting will be held to discuss sidewalks along with the traffic calming measures and how they are related. Any decisions on sidewalks will be decided based on input from neighbors. As for concerns about pedestrians on narrowed/"chicaned" streets, Bilgrami said there are designs that combine chicanes and sidewalks.

The meeting was adjourned.