

**COLLEGE GARDENS CIVIC ASSOCIATION (CGCA)
MEETING MINUTES, November 18, 2008**

GENERAL MEETING

Mike Phillips, President of CGCA, welcomed the membership (approx 40) to the meeting.

Pond Update

Lisa Soukup, of the City of Rockville's Public Works Department gave an in-depth presentation of the upcoming pond construction. This project has been under consideration since 1999, with a complete concept study performed in 2006. Lisa showed a large poster of the pond design. Construction is expected to begin after the holidays.

HMF Paving, Inc., of Frederick, MD is expected to be awarded the construction job by the Major and Council on November 24th, based on their low bid and history of working with the city. The bid from HMF is for \$1,389,481.50. Because of the lower bid, four optional "add-ons" are expected to be included in the overall project: basketball courts overlook deck on the bigger pond, a deck over the inflow of the smaller pond, and concrete pads around the picnic tables. The pond project is scheduled to be completed by August 2009. We hope the park will be ready for National Night Out but we cannot predict what delays may impact the construction.

Part of the new pond construction project includes stream restoration. This restoration work will occur in the woods behind the nine houses on College Parkway. EQR is the firm that will be doing the stream restoration work. Stream restoration is expected to be completed by February 28, 2009.

Interesting Note: Stream restoration in general cannot take place from March 15th to June 1st because that is fish spawning season.

Based on a question about sand volleyball courts, Mike Critzer of the City's Recreation and Parks Department said they were planning on adding a new sand volleyball court. It is not on the final design plans but there are 2 flat areas that seem suitable for this use. The volleyball court would be installed by City employees and is therefore not part of the pond renovation project.

School walkers will be detoured around construction, as the path through the park will be closed as soon as construction begins. It was suggested that school walkers walk up College Parkway and cross at Yale Place since there is an adult crossing guard on duty there. Alternatively, school walkers can walk up Auburn Avenue to Tulane and walk into the back of the school properties.

The new playground will be closed for a couple of weeks initially during the beginning of construction. But it should be available for most of the time otherwise.

Elise Cary, Assistant City Forester, said a number of trees will be removed during the construction. They have tried to keep trees wherever possible. But many trees are old and

damaged and need to be removed. Twice as many new trees will be planted as old trees are removed. All new trees are covered by a 5 year warranty.

Some neighbors whose property borders the new playground asked for more trees to be planted as a buffer against sight and sound from the playground. Mike Critzer said he would look into that.

A question about possible lighting inside the new pond/park was brought up. At this time lighting is not in the plans as park use is not encouraged after dark. There is electric in the park if a future development were to include lighting.

Questions or concerns during construction can be emailed to nlewis@rockvilleMD.gov. Questions about the trees can be emailed to Forester Inspector at pperez@rockvilleMD.gov.

Monthly construction updates will be emailed or made available on a website. CGCA will attempt to post these updates or links for the community.

Montgomery College No Smoking Policy

Sometime during the summer, MC implemented an absolute smoking ban on all MC property. This smoking ban has resulted in students and faculty who smoke to congregate right off the MC property. Problem areas have emerged behind Plymouth Woods and on the cul-de-sac at Princeton Place. In these areas, smokers gather before, between, and after classes to light up. Cigarette butts, wrappers, and trash are showing up in greater quantities.

Additionally, Princeton Place is being used for parking for many students since it is very convenient to “their” new smoking area.

Numerous neighbors in the affected areas showed up at the meeting to express their concern and to ask for action. Some noted they have seen large groups of smokers, hookahs, possible marijuana use, as well as making-out in parked cars. Parents said they were not comfortable with their young, impressionable kids seeing groups of students hanging out and smoking in front of their property. Some residents said they felt intimidated by the groups hanging out in front of their property.

Supposedly, MC has sent numerous emails to students and faculty directing smokers to the Mannakee side of campus. This seems to have had little affect in reducing smokers on the College Gardens side.

One neighbor said they had read that a meeting of the MC Board of Regents was having a meeting at the Germantown campus on 11/20. It might be good for someone from the CGCA leadership to try to attend the meeting to raise the issue and our concerns.

Jenny Kimball, Assistant to the City Manager, was at the meeting. Rockville has approach MC to complain about the problem. The City has no authority over MC or the use of MC property. A possible action discussed was to turn Princeton Place into a permit parking zone.

It was noted this also penalizes the area residents who enjoy on street parking. Jenny will continue to lobby the college on behalf of the neighbors.

A motion was made (and passed with none opposed) that CGCA's position is that MC should rescind or modify their no-smoking policy.

It was suggested that MC could set aside designated smoking areas *on their property* for smokers.

Elyse Gussow, President of Plymouth Woods Condo Association, said they had met with MC on 9/29 to complain about the smoking policy and received no satisfaction.

Another motion was made (and passed with none opposed) that CGCA would appoint a 3 member task force to "organize a meeting with similar area HOA's and Condo Associations to develop a common, united position that can be brought and presented to MC." And if MC continued to refused to take steps to alleviate the problem, then the issue would be brought up to elected county and state officials. It was noted that these officials should take notice as between the 4 area associations there are approximately 3000 voters. It was further pointed out that only the county and the state wield any actual power of influence on MC.

Other items

New courthouse construction begins Monday, 11/24. The new courthouse is to be located on the site of the old library at the corner of Jefferson St. and Maryland Ave. Watch for increased traffic and consider alternate routes.

The meeting was adjourned.

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