

HOTLINE

The Neighborhood Newsletter of West Laurel

President's Message

Spring has arrived and with it has come my annual house cleaning and yard cleanup. In many respects the responsibility of serving as the President of the West Laurel Civic Association is just like being a home owner, lots of spring chores that pay great dividends. For me the entire community is my backyard. So I thought I'd go over the community areas of concern and then highlight some of the many successes in West Laurel.

If you're like me, the value of my house is right at the top of the list. While the rest of the DC metro area appears to be rebounding nicely, homes in West Laurel continue to remain depressed and well below reasonable market value. I've talked with realtors

and residents about how we can mitigate the impact of what the words Prince George's County and Laurel bring up in the minds of potential home buyers. Short of succession or a new zip code, or the county budget miraculously increasing, our best course of action is to report problems and put pressure on to ensure code is enforced. This includes overgrown yards, multiple families in a single home, commercial trucks parked at night, rooming houses, dumping, and illegal sheds and fences.

Most of us are reluctant to report a neighbor, or if you're like me with a foreclosure next door, you don't know who to call. For Prince Georges County, you can always call Councilwoman Mary

Spring General Meeting

The Spring General meeting is scheduled for May 17th at 7:30pm at the West Laurel Community Building. With all of the news at the state and county levels regarding budgetary shortfalls which may result in doomsday budgets

locally, the full evening will be dedicated to our elected officials. At the state level the 14th delegation (Senator Karen Montgomery, Delegates Anne Kaiser, Eric Luedtke, Craig Zucker) from Montgomery County and the 21st delegation

**WLCA Spring
General Meeting
Thursday, May
17th - 7:30 pm**

**West Laurel
Community
Building**

**Updates from
Elected Officials**

**Board of Directors
Election**

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President's Column (cont)

Lehman's office ((301) 952-3887), send an email to DERcares@co.pg.md.us, or call a member of the WLCA board or call me (301-776-2314). Montgomery County residents call 311. Regardless of county, you must report in order for any action to occur. Many residents, including me, are frustrated by the slow response we are getting from code enforcement. But we need to keep calling – if only to document our concerns.

Our goal is to show realtors and future home buyers not familiar with the area that West Laurel is the best neighborhood in the metro area. Realtors who live in West Laurel know that we have a great elementary school, low crime rates, and very active civic groups. Outsiders to the area hear Prince George's County and are immediately turned off. Several of the West Laurel realtors have agreed to get together and brainstorm how we can collectively get our message across. If you are interested in participating, please let me know. All ideas are welcome.

On a positive note, congratulations to the Destination Imagination team from Bond Mill Elementary School on placing 3rd at the Maryland state finals and earning a spot in the global finals in Knoxville, Tennessee. The team of six 5th grade students and one 6th grader from Martin Luther King Middle School will be competing in a science-based category focused on solar energy. If you are interested in supporting the team, please contact Diana Stroud (301-490-2969) who is heading up the fund raising effort. The list is rather endless when it comes

to recognizing folks who don't wait to be asked but simply step up when they see a need. These small acts of community service make West Laurel a great place to live.

I want to mention several projects that impact the residents of West Laurel and the value of our homes. West Laurel has been selected by the Prince Georges County Department of Public Works & Transportation and the Neighborhood Design Center to participate in a pilot program to replace the Bradford Pear trees with less problematic species. The full details are in a separate article in the Hotline and online at www.wlcaweb.org. The WLCA vied for a spot in this program last year and we're delighted to have made the list of communities this year. I believe this effort will increase the value of our homes.

WSSC has multiple projects from cleaning out the existing three water mains, surveying and lining the sewer lines, building a wall by the dam to prevent flooding as required by the Maryland Department of the Environment, a study on the environmental impact of trail riding, and of course the big new pipeline scheduled to run parallel to Brooklyn Bridge Road and down the length of Bond Mill Road. Both Councilwoman Mary Lehman and Delegate Pena-Melnyk have been working with us to help sort these many projects out and have WSSC provide the reasons for each project along with clear details and timelines. While ultimately positive for West Laurel and the 500,000 homes that receive water from Rocky Gorge, while underway each project will be disruptive to residents and may make home buyers reluctant to purchase in a community that is under construction. The loss of trail

West Laurel Housing Values

Real estate values continue to be effected by the real estate slump of the previous three years.. Only 8 homes in West Laurel were sold in the first quarter of the year, 2 were foreclosures, and all in Prince Georges County. The average price increased from the 2011 prices by \$21,000. The slow foreclosure process in Maryland continues to impact West Laurel from vacant homes and lower sales. There are still several homes held by the banks (pre-foreclosure) and several foreclosed homes. The chart below shows home sales from 2008 to the present for all homes sold in Montgomery County and Prince Georges County. It does not include no-cost property transfers or unimproved property.

For more information visit the Maryland Department of

Quarter	Total # Sold	Average Cost	Lowest Price	Highest Price
Jan-Mar 12	8	341,877	\$151,000	\$510,642
Jan-Mar 11	17	\$336,806	\$160,000	\$714,060
Apr - Jun 11	12	\$282,511	\$180,000	\$297,700
Jul - Sep 11	14	\$328,980	\$179,000	\$725,000
Oct-Dec 11	11	\$324,736	\$150,000	\$725,999
Totals	54	\$320,423	\$150,000	\$725,999
Jan-Mar 10	9	\$341,638	\$197,650	\$536,432
Apr-Jun 10	23	\$338,662	\$130,000	\$552,175
Jul-Sep 10	16	\$356,906	\$190,000	\$661,003
Oct-Dec 10	16	\$352,262	\$191,250	\$610,150
Totals	64	\$ 347,128	\$130,000	\$661,003
Jan-Mar 09	17	\$357,839	\$276,000	\$493,830
Apr-Jun 09	12	\$319,135	\$230,000	\$410,175
Jul-Aug 09	11	\$346,841	\$176,500	\$503,100
Sep-Dec 09	18	\$295,230	\$190,200	\$546,727
Totals	58	\$329,761	\$176,500	\$546,727

Assessments and Taxation web site at http://sdatcert3.resiusa.org/rp_rewrite/. After selecting the county of interest, you can search by address, property sales, property account, or map references. West Laurel addresses in Prince George's County are located in District 10, Map 0002 and Map 0005; West Laurel portions of Montgomery County are located in District 05, Maps LS11, LS21 and LS22.

West Laurel Home Sales— 1 Jan thru 31 Mar 2012

15900 Sherwood Ave	\$151,000	5803 Huckburn Court	\$365,000
6503 Darwin Road	\$230,000	6804 Diploma Drive	\$420,429
6641 Park Hall Drive	\$260,000	6807 Diploma Drive	\$482,949
15505 Bounds Ave	\$315,000	16305 Education Court	\$510,642

HOT News— the ICC is Back

This week West Laurel residents whose property abuts I-95 received notification from the ICC project last week that the collector lanes along I-95 for the ICC have been reinstated in a revised delivery (Contract D/E). The collector road on I-95 starts south of Route 198 and goes northward to just about Brooklyn Bridge road directly impacting homes on Kenny, Redmiles, Fitzpatrick, Bradford, and Old Sandy Spring Road and homes two to three blocks away.

The WLCA and residents contacted the ICC to ask why we were not informed about the revised project which included the collector road. In response to the WLCA email, the ICC response stated ***"the homes located just west of I-95 and north of MD 1998 were inadvertently left off the mailing list"***. This is absolutely unsatisfactory and the WLCA has gone on record to the ICC project team saying so.

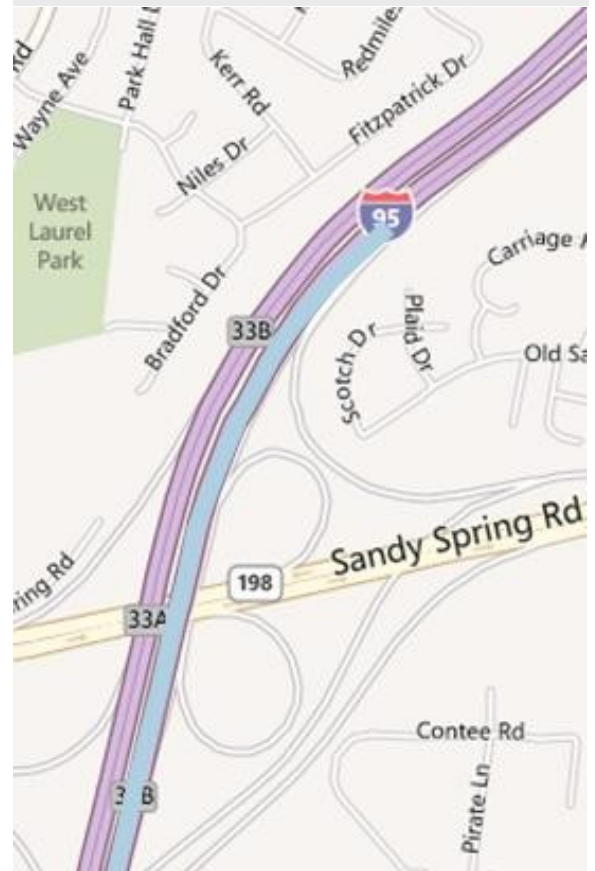
In conversation with the liaison, I indicated that it is not just the homes directly abutting the interstate that are effect but also the homes several blocks in. We have also put forth questions regarding extending the noise barrier north, impact on the WSSC pipelines, and landscaping to decrease the noise, dirt, and other difficulties with I-95 being widened to accommodate the collector lane.

There is an initial meeting with the ICC project team on May 10th at 7:30pm for residents who are directly impacted by this project. We have also contacted Councilwoman Lehman and members of the 21st delegation to alert them to this issue. To be successful, all of West Laurel needs to engage on this.

Community Meeting with ICC project team

**Thursday, May 10th
7:30 pm**

West Laurel Community Building



Contract D/E Modified C-D Roads on I-95 ICC from I-95 to US 1

Contract # AT3765D60

\$89.3M

(Contract Amount)

NTP: 2.17.2012

Open: Spring 2014 Estimated

0.9	Mainline Miles	165,000	SY Paving
2.4	Collector-Distributor Miles	475,000	CY Cut
2.4	Miles of I-95 Resurfacing	1	Intersection
0.7	Miles Along US 1	1	Partial Interchange
			1 New Bridge

President's Column (continued from page 3)

privileges has already negatively impacted the commercial barns in West Laurel. The WLCA has submitted multiple Maryland Privacy Information Act (MPIA) requests to WSSC to review the data and rationale for each project. The WLCA leadership remains active in working with WSSC.

I look forward to seeing you all at the May 17th General Meeting. *Melissa Daston*

General Meeting (continued from page 1)

(Senator Jim Rosapepe, Delegates Barnes, Frush, Pena-Melnyk) from Prince George's County have been invited. At the county level, Councilwoman Mary Lehman (District 1) will be attending.

At the Federal level, Congresswoman Donna Edwards has sent her regrets. However, the Congresswoman has agreed to speak at the October General Meeting. For those who may not be aware, the new boundaries have moved West Laurel under Congresswoman Donna Edwards.

The Spring meeting is also when residents elect a new slate of officers for the West Laurel Civic Association. This year we are also recommending an amendment to the WLCA by-laws.

As written, "Section 5.03 **Incidental Expenditures**. The President may authorize incidental expenditures not greater than \$100 without prior approval of the Board of Directors or the Association but he shall detail these expenditures to the Board of Directors at the next Board meeting and the Treasurer shall report such expenditures at the next

General meeting." and "Section 6.05 **Approval of Expenditures**. The Board of Directors shall approve all expenditures greater than \$100." The recommended change is to increase the incidental expenditures to \$300 reflecting the increased costs of business.

We will also be honoring our Good Neighbors Debbie Hoover and Pete Ruiz.

Debbie Hoover is the volunteer primary moderator of the West Laurel Yahoo forum. Debbie answered the call for help shortly after the site was set upon 2007. In the past 5 years, she has reviewed and approved over 5,000 postings about happenings around West Laurel ensuring we are all up on topics of interest.

Pete Ruiz is being recognized for his ongoing contributions to West Laurel. Pete's been a Little League coach for many years but is now adding a free math prep course for students applying to Eleanor Roosevelt High School. This year he has 17 students in the prep class. Thanks to both of you for your contributions to the community.

Zoning News

Fairland Park (Artery Group). After a delay of more than a year, this long-planned development is moving forward. This development spans both Prince George's and Montgomery counties with a section along Old Gunpowder Road and an entrance off of McKnew Road in Montgomery County. Approvals have been given in Prince George's County and is scheduled for review in Montgomery County.

The overall community is 385 dwellings. Prince George's will consist of 138 homes -- 104 single family homes and 34 town homes (22 feet wide). Montgomery County includes 247 homes -- 216 single family and 31 town houses or moderately priced dwelling units. Landscape buffers are planned and significant parkland has been dedicated. Work is scheduled to begin later this year.

Eglise de Dieu. The property is 4.6 acre parcel at the corner of Riding Stable Road and Route 198 in Montgomery County. The initial submission to Montgomery County was on hold based on their water/sewer approval. The church is moving forward with the preliminary plan being submitted to Montgomery County. The proposed plan is for a small sanctuary with seating for 200 persons, a

small community room with no kitchen, and parking for 55 cars. The proposed entrance is off Riding Stable Road -- closer to Route 198 than Huckburn. In return for sewer hook-up, the church will remove the small white house and will dedicate 1.5 acres as forest conservation. Sewer hookup will entail digging up Riding Stable Road and Huckburn to connect to the sewer in Wyndham Woods.

The church held an open meeting with residents in late March where the overwhelming number of comments dealt with traffic -- the location of the entrance so close to Route 198, concern over additional traffic fatalities.

Additional issues raised included stormwater management, a landscape buffer along Riding Stable Road, where the sign for the church will be located, and pedestrian/bike impacts. WLCA highly recommends residents to attend the formal hearings in Montgomery County; date to be announced.

Jehovah's Witness. The property is along Sweitzer Lane and work is being done by members of the congregation. Work was halted for the winter and began again in April.

Dumpster Day— June 2nd

By popular demand, the West Laurel Civic Association and the Prince George's Waste Management Division have once again arranged for a Spring cleanup on June 2nd from 8:30am until 12:30 pm, or when the dumpster are full, in the parking lot of the West Laurel Community

Hotline — The Neighborhood Newsletter of West Laurel

Dumpster Day—June 2nd (continued)

Building. Every time we hold this event, we have filled two dumpsters and turned folks away -- this time we will have three (3) dumpsters on hand. Last fall several residents did a bit of dumpster diving salvaging gas grills and file cabinets from going to the land fill. Hazardous materials and electronics will not be accepted. This includes used oil, oil-based paint, tires, propane tanks, and computer monitors. We will be able to take mattresses, old furniture, light construction debris, and broken toys and household items.

If you are a senior or disabled citizen, the WLCA will once again pick up materials from your house and dispose of them for you. Call or email Jason Float, 443-878-6360 jason.float@gmail.com, to schedule a pick-up. As always, we need volunteers with pickup trucks willing to help with the senior citizen pickups and to direct cars at the Community building. If you're available to help with the senior citizen effort, please let Jason know as well. If you are willing to help at the Community Center, we need volunteers between 8:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Membership

This is the last call for residents to pay their September 2011 through August 2012 annual dues. Our membership campaign this year was extremely successful -- we have 550 dues paying members, an increase of more than 150 households. Our goal 600 is within reach.

Many of you made donations in addition to your dues allowing us to reinstate donations to volunteer fire and rescue to the full amount -- **Thank you.** If you are unsure if you have paid your dues, go to the WLCA web site (www.wlcaweb.org) and click on the pink box to see a list of all addresses and dues payments.

Dues are a bargain at \$15 per year per household. Your dues go to cover the costs of the HOTLINE, legal expenses, donations to community organizations including the Bond Mill

PTO, Laurel Volunteer Fire and Rescue, Cub and Boy Scouts, Laurel Grad Night, and the Rag Tag Band.

The WLCA board members receive no compensation for their work and have collectively donated more than 5,000 hours of their time this year testifying at hearings in Upper Marlboro, Rockville, and Annapolis, meeting with WSSC, Code Enforcement, Public Works, volunteering at Dumpster Day, organizing Neighborhood Watch programs, and countless of other details.

If you wish to pay your dues for this year, send a check payable to WLCA to Susan Railey, 16922 Melbourne Drive, Laurel MD 20707. You may also use PayPal to pay your dues. A hotlink is on the WLCA web page. Of course you can always pay at the General Meeting.

2012-2013 WLCA Elections

All Board members serve for two-year terms unless elected to fill a one-year slot. Board meetings are held monthly on the second Thursday at 7:30 PM at the West Laurel Community Building.

We prefer to have two alternate Area Reps in each area because we know it is often difficult for regular Area Reps to be at every meeting. Alternates are encouraged to attend as much as possible and participate in discussions and committee assignments, but will not be voting members unless filling in for an absent Area Rep for their area.

Please consider being an active member of the WLCA Board to help keep West Laurel well-represented and to stay in touch with what is happening in and around your community. If you wish to add your name to the slate of officers for the 2012-2013 year, please contact your area representative who will forward the information to the full board. *Officers & Area*

Representatives in bold are up for vote at the May General Meeting.

OFFICERS
President **Melissa Daston**
 1st Vice President Cassandra Hostetler
 2nd Vice President.....Barbara Sollner-Webb
 Recording Secretary Tom Dernoga
Treasurer **Susan Railey**

AREA 1 REPRESENTATIVES
Rep (2 year) **John Hebert**
 Rep (1 year) Tom Sidor
 Alternate Kevin Reich

AREA 2 REPRESENTATIVES
Rep (2 year) **Patty Sobel**
 Rep (1 year) Vacant

AREA 3 REPRESENTATIVES
Rep (2 year) **Ryan Faggard**
 Rep (1 year) Mike McPherson

AREA 4 REPRESENTATIVES
Rep (2 year) **Tony Spezio**
 Rep (1 year) Lucy Grimes
 Alt **Doris Reynold**
 Alt **Dennis Cook**

AREA 5 REPRESENTATIVES
Rep (2 year) **Steve Steenrod**
 Rep (1 year) Elizabeth Evans
 Alt **Elizabeth Schwartz**

Welcome New Neighbors

The West Laurel Civic Association (WLCA) extends a warm welcome to the families who became residents of West Laurel in 2012. Every homeowner is automatically a member of the Civic Association and upon payment of the annual dues, entitled to vote in elections. West Laurel is an active community with many volunteer opportunities, including the civic association, recreation council, and Bond Mill elementary school. We look forward to meeting

you at the May 17th Civic Association General Meeting.

Juan Valentin	Bounds Ave
Linda Dawkins	Darwin Road
Abdoussalam Koly	Diploma Drive
Akshay Ranganathan	Diploma Drive
Babar Ifikhar	Education Court
Muhammad Umar	Huckburn Court
James Murray	Park Hall Drive
Edyta Pieczykolan	Sherwood Ave

Prince George's County Replaces Bradford Pears

Once named the County tree, the Bradford Pear has been retired by the Prince George's County Government. Planted freely across the County, the tree is proving to be a huge economic liability to the County government, local utility companies and homeowners who together planted thousands of them over the past 50 years. A plan has been put forward to systematically replace the Bradford Pear trees over the next few years.

Realizing that many homeowners are passionate about the Bradford Pear, even when they are misshapen, a danger and invasive, the County has contracted with a local non-profit to provide community outreach, which aims to allow a smooth process through removal and replacement. West Laurel is one of 18 communities targeted in the pilot program. The Neighborhood Design Center staff will meet with civic groups to describe the program and answer any questions. The WLCA is working with the NDC to set up a date and time for our community meeting.

The NDC staff will explain the origin of the Bradford Pear, which was thought to be a wonderful tree with no disease issues. What was not apparent until about 20 years afterplanting, they have a weakness at the point where the tree was originally grafted, which makes them very prone to large branches breaking off or whole trees splitting apart as residents of West Laurel have found during snow, ice, and stormy weather. For the past

twenty years the Bradford Pears have become increasingly expensive to deal with during storm events. Only dead, dying or weakened trees posing a safety threat to homes, pedestrians and vehicular traffic will be removed at this time. It will be rare for an entire street to have all trees removed.

Replacement trees have been chosen based on their excellent performance as street trees over the past few decades. There are five varieties of ornamental tree, which will be planted where power lines are present or on narrow streets or courts. On wider streets with no power lines, five large trees have been chosen because they grow tall, with a large canopy to provide shade.

Phase #1 will be an identification of potential trees to be removed by three arborists.

Phase #2 The NDC staff will meet with the WLCA and residents to explain the Program and get feedback from the residents. Residents can opt not to have their trees removed, provided they sign a waiver accepting liability if the trees subsequently fall and cause damage to persons or property.

Phase #3 Demolition of trees will be completed by two separate contractors. The first will remove branches from the trees and chip the wood. The second will remove the trunk and grind the stumps.

Phase #4 Replacement of trees, mulching and staking .

Beasock's Beat

Hi West Laurel:

Three times a year your Civic Association saves space in their newsletter so that I can reach out to every resident.

This time I want to discuss a matter that has become a hot topic in the news. My message to you revolves around two words. These words are spelled and sound similar but have a very different meaning.



The first word is vigilant (alertly watchful). I have said this many times and I will continue to do so, "the residents of West Laurel are my eyes and ears". Law enforcement personnel appreciate information they receive from citizens. This information is held in strict confidence and is appropriately acted upon. A resident who is acutely aware of suspicious people and inappropriate activity and reports this information in a timely manner is a great partner to law enforcement authorities. The best way to ensure that this information is acted upon quickly is to call 911.

Once you have dialed 911 your call will be logged in and acted upon. I am sure you realize that I cannot respond to all 911 calls from West Laurel. -- but someone will. My colleagues and I have all received the same training and all are equally competent.

Before you call 911, I would ask that you do the following: 1) Try to get someplace where you will be safe, and 2) Stay on the phone with the dispatcher and try to answer questions as best you can (even if it doesn't make sense to you). You may answer a question put to you by the 911 dispatcher that greatly helps the police and you don't even realize it.

The second word that I want to discuss is the word vigilante (a self-appointed group of citizens who undertake law enforcement in their community without legal authority, typically because the legal agencies are thought to be inadequate). Vigilante's do not help the police. ***DO NOT TAKE THE LAW INTO YOUR OWN HANDS.***

My colleagues and I go through a vigorous training, and we receive the right equipment to handle all dangerous situations. We are also empowered by the law to protect citizens and arrest criminals. Stand aside and let us do our jobs.

Compared to other communities crime in West Laurel is low. Since March we have only had 1 home break-in Unfortunately vandalism on cars is once again on the rise. Thankfully West Laurel residents are vigilant and not vigilantes. Let's keep it that way.

Cpl James Beasock
Community Police Officer

Biking with Beasock

The West Laurel Civic Association and the Prince George's County Police (District VI) will hold our annual Biking with Beasock event on Thursday, June 14th (rain date Friday, June 15th) at 6:00 p.m. The police and residents of West Laurel will once again gather at Bond Mill School on Sherwood Drive for a ride around our community.

This event is open to children and adults. Everyone who rides a bike is welcome. Those who participated in last year's event truly enjoyed their time with the local police officers.

The goal is to introduce the children of West Laurel to the police in a positive and fun event. Water stations will be available along the route and there will be a sweeper car to take riders who cannot complete the route back to the school. Assistant Chief. Kevin Davis, will be on hand to start the bikers off on their journey. See you there!

News You Can Use

PROPERTY STANDARDS

- Grass may not be more than 12 inches high.
- Rental licenses are required to rent a single family dwelling
- No more than 5 unrelated individuals may live in a single dwelling
- Most small business are illegal to be operated out of a residential home
- Call 301-883-6100 to report problems

ANIMAL CONTROL

- All animals are subject to being on a leash
- Owners of dogs and cats must remove pet excrement for public or private property
- All dogs, cats, ferrets must be licensed and inoculated for rabies
- Pit bulls are illegal
- Guard dogs must be licensed and able to demonstrate obedience training
- Owners must be informed of noisy animals. If the noise is not abated residents may contact the Commission for Animal control to file a complaint (Commission for Animal Control, 9400 Peppercorn Place, Suite 520, Largo, MD 20774).

PARKING VIOLATIONS (Prince Georges County)

- No vehicle over 10,000 lbs allowed to park on public streets without moving for more than 72 hours.
- No unregistered vehicle or trailer may be parked on public streets at any time.
- No parking in front of a drive-way, on a sidewalk, within 15 feet of a hydrant, within 20 feet of a crosswalk, within 30 feet of a stop or yield sign, in a direction opposite the traffic flow, on an unpaved area of a residential lot less than 1 acre.
- No person shall leave an abandoned or inoperable vehicle for more than 48 hours on a public street.
- No commercial bus may be parked on a public street un-less they are in the course of a commercial purpose.
- Call 301-772-2060 or email dsmc-graw@co.pg.md.us to report all violations.

West Laurel Civic Association
P.O. BOX 387
Laurel MD, 20725



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