

HOTLINE

The Neighborhood Newsletter of West Laurel

President's Message

When I moved to West Laurel almost 26 years ago, I was introduced to the West Laurel Civic Association through a copy of the HOTLINE which showed up about a month after I moved in. We have continued our commitment to publishing a community newsletter three times a year (Fall, Winter, and Spring) and have it delivered to every home in West Laurel. As the number of homes increases, we update our addresses to include those homes.

Over the past several months in conversations with residents -- new and old -- I was quite surprised to discover that many residents are unaware of the WLCA, do not understand their automatic membership, or have a misperception regarding the role of Board members.

The most common question is: *What is the WLCA?* The WLCA has been part of West Laurel since its inception. Our mission is to protect and

preserve the quality of life in West Laurel, to take an active part in the civic activities and affairs affecting the West Laurel area, and to encourage participating in government while not endorsing any candidate for political office nor any political party.

We have a long history of supporting all three mission areas. In recent years, as development in Prince George's County has crept north from Beltsville, east from Montgomery County, and south from Howard County, the WLCA has become more and more proactive with zoning issues, expanding our engagement with elected officials at the county and state levels regarding new legislation that impacts our residents, and developing relationships with key offices in each county. Many of our citizens have written letters and attended hearings to ensure the West Laurel voices are heard. Over the past several years, the (continued on page 3)

Fall General Meeting

The Fall 2013 West Laurel General Meeting will be on October 17th from 7:30 to 9:00 pm at the West Laurel Community Building. After a tremendous amount of publicity about what will or will not be happening to the Prince George's County Hospital System, there has been silence. Many

of us are concerned over the main hospital, currently in Cheverly, the Laurel hospital, the Bowie Health Campus, and the Glenridge Medical Center all of which are part of the county system.

Our guest for the evening will be (continued on page 4)

WLCA Fall General Meeting Thursday, October 17th - 7:30 pm

West Laurel Community Building

Updates from Dimensions Healthcare

2013-2014 Budget Approval

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Housing Values	2
Bond Mill ES	4
Affordable Care	4
Beasock's Beat	5
2013-14 Budget	6
WSSC Deer Hunt	6
Dumpster Day	7
Recreation News	7
Code Enforcement	8
WSSC Projects	9
Zoning Updates	10
Watershed Usage	11
Home Value	12
Rain Tax	13
ICC Update	13
Recycling	14
WLCA Officers	15

West Laurel Housing Values

By Lenora Dernoga

This summer, market activity stayed hot in West Laurel! Home sales and prices remained at a steady level. The average sales price increased moderately since the same quarter last year, and the number of days homes stayed on the market decreased significantly. Put simply, West Laurel homes are selling for more and faster. Foreclosures and short sales still linger in the Laurel area, but are dwindling in our West Laurel neighborhood. Inventory is still slightly below the norm, which has contributed to home prices remaining steady. The chart below shows home sales for the second quarter of 2013 and compares them to the second quarter of 2012. For more information, visit the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation website at <http://www.dat.state.md.us>.

Address	BR/BA	Acres	List Price	SOLD Price	Days on
15804 Wayne Avenue	4/3	.27	\$265,000	\$317,150	3
6007 Parkway Drive	3/2	.45	\$210,000	\$201,350	27
6501 Walker Branch	5/4	.27	\$254,900	\$254,900	16
6110 Kaybro Street	4/4	.35	\$388,000	\$365,000	76
15504 Bond Mill Road	2/2	.47	\$275,000	\$257,000	126
15903 Bond Mill Road	3/3	.24	\$350,000	\$350,000	19
6615 McCahill Drive	3/3	.23	\$280,000	\$300,000	4
7106 Redmiles Road	4/3	.34	\$299,900	\$310,000	20
16601 Brooklyn Bridge	5/4	.36	\$385,000	\$382,500	5
6411 Forest Mill Lane	5/3	.37	\$350,000	\$350,000	11
6409 Park Hall Drive	4/3	.36	\$349,900	\$340,000	63
6300 Forest Mill Lane	5/3	.23	\$339,900	\$314,900	49
7004 Fitzpatrick Drive	4/3	.27	\$325,000	\$315,000	21
15408 Bond Mill Road	3/2	.49	\$274,900	\$274,900	5
16004 Kerr Road	3/3	.64	\$265,000	\$240,000	9
5700 Huckburn Court	4/4	.44	\$534,900	\$535,000	4
6640 Park Hall Drive	4/3	.25	\$374,900	\$369,000	23
16209 Gales Street	5/3	.23	\$324,900	\$325,000	4

ANALYSIS	2nd Quarter 2013	2nd Quarter 2012
Average Sold Price	\$322,316	\$275,000
Low SOLD Price	\$201,350	\$209,000
High SOLD Price	\$535,000	\$370,000
Average Days on Market	27	48

Conclusion. The average SOLD price has increased 14 percent from 2nd quarter 2012 to 2nd quarter 2013. The average days on the market has decreased by 43 percent.

President's Column (continued)

WLCA Board have really stepped up and we've been able to add a regular Dumpster Day in our own community twice a year, been successful in reinvigorating a moribund Neighborhood Watch, developed partnerships with the Prince George's County Police with Cpl. Beasock as our community officer, begun an outreach program to assist seniors in the community, and held numerous special events -- all in addition to our regular business of coordinating with the Prince George's and Montgomery governments and keeping a full court press on developers wanting to build in and around our community. Later in this edition of the HOTLINE we have a full article outlining the myriad of new and continuing development projects in our area.

Who is a member of the WLCA? Simply put, every resident in West Laurel, including residents in homes with separate HOAs, is a member. The boundary of West Laurel to the north is the river, to the east Laurel City limits (south side of Brooklyn Bridge Road beginning at Dorset Road and after Woodview Terrace on the north side of Brooklyn Bridge Road), to the south Route 198 including properties abutting on the south side, and to the west Riding Stable Road including properties on any road abutting it plus properties on Birmingham Road.

We ask that each home (not person) pay a \$15 annual dues fee to cover costs of the HOTLINE, special mailings, and support to other non-profit groups that provide services to West Laurel residents. You should have received a separate mailing from the WLCA in mid-September reminding you of the annual dues along with an envelope for you to return it to our Treasurer. The full details of what your funds support are in the proposed 2013-2014 budget in this edition. The number of dues-paying members also carries weight with our elected officials -- so we do count on you. Regardless of whether you pay dues or not, you are a member.

What do those Board members do? Let me start by saying everyone on the WLCA Board is a volunteer -- no one receives any payment for their time. Board members do everything from attending zoning hearings to hauling old furniture from seniors' basements for Dumpster Day. They are the eyes and ears for their neighborhoods providing information to residents on whom to call, reporting problems to the correct officials, and volunteering for special events. They are gracious with their time and effort and are key to keeping West Laurel the community we love.

In the past 18 months we have been busier than ever with tremendous pressures coming from new development in and around West Laurel. You'll read more about this in a separate article but we have four active church projects, a soccer sports center, new houses on Old Gunpowder and along Route 198 next to West Laurel, massive and potentially dense redevelopment of Burtonsville, significant development along the Patuxent River in Howard County, and of course Konterra. Every week this summer, the WLCA board was in discussion with developers. So if you run into one of the Board members, remember to thank them for their efforts.

I've served on the WLCA Board for the past 10 years, as an area representative, vice-president, and president. Susan Railey, our treasurer, has also been active for an extended period. For both of us, it has been an honor, a challenge, and incredibly rewarding to know our efforts have kept West Laurel *the place* to live. We will be stepping down from the Board at the end of our terms in August 2014. We are letting the community know well in advance so that anyone who is interested in these positions can come forward and have some time with us in our current positions. We always welcome new volunteers.

Melissa

General Meeting (continued)

Mr. Neil Moore, the President and CEO of Dimensions Healthcare System. Delegate Barbara Frush, a member of the Dimensions Board of Directors, has sent her sincere regrets at being unable to attend due to a prior engagement. In talking with Delegate Frush about this in July, I found out that I had erroneously thought that the University of Maryland was taking over the system. In fact, it is a partnership.

In our May Hotline I indicated that I was hoping for an update on the new hospital system -- where is it going to be located, will Laurel close, what's the time line? Laurel Regional Hospital was built in 1978 and is ready for updates - when will the

building infrastructure be refreshed? We have asked Mr. Moore to address these questions and any others you may have regarding the overall process.

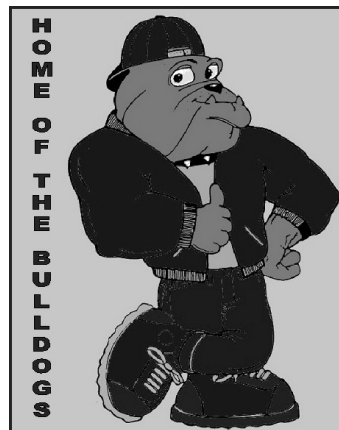
In addition to our guest speaker, residents will be treated to a *Presentation of the Colors* by our own Cub and Boy Scouts and will also be voting on the 2013-14 budget.

Please join us at the October 17th General Meeting at 7:30pm at the West Laurel Community Building. I look forward to seeing you there.

Bond Mill Elementary School

Bond Mill Elementary School is currently selling 2014 Chick Fil-A Calendars for \$6 each and are available in the office during school hours.

The last week of October and first week of November they will be selling KidStuff books, a book similar to the Entertainment Book from years past, but geared towards children and parents. This is the book for Maryland and at the cost of \$25, it pays for itself after just a few coupon uses. Feel free to stop by the school office during those two weeks and pick one up for yourself, as a gift or both.



As always, Bond Mill is still collecting Box Tops, Campbell's Soup Labels and Coke caps. And don't forget to drop your paper into our paper recycle bins located in the parking lot. It all adds up!

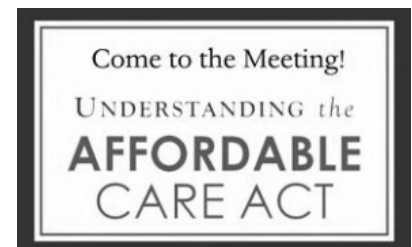
Affordable Health Care Forum

The 21st Delegation (Senator Rosapepe, Delegates Barnes, Frush, and Pena-Melnyk) are sponsoring a *Health Care Forum* on Saturday, October 5th at Laurel High School from 10am to 4pm. Under the Affordable Care Act, most residents are required to have health insurance beginning in 2014.

Individuals have six months to enroll in a plan between October 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014. If you enroll by mid-December, your coverage will begin January 1, 2014.

Health care experts will educate you on coverage options under the Affordable Care Act and assist you in signing up for a plan. The forum will be staffed by employees representing both Prince George's and Montgomery counties.

The event is free of charge but does require pre-registration. You may call 301-858-3141 to register or go to the 21stdistrictdelegation.com website.



Beasock's Beat

Recently West Laurel experienced a mini-crime wave where thirteen cars were broken into and air bags, navigation systems, center consoles, and even a car door were stolen. The police have been actively following up on this including additional patrols in the neighborhood. This is a good time to remind you to call 911 whenever you see anything suspicious. Do not assume that your neighbor is going to call it in. Whether it be a strange car in a driveway, solicitors at your door, or a garage door open that's generally not left open, the correct response is always to call 911.

Although there has been a bump in our crime statistics, West Laurel remains one of the safest neighborhoods in District VI. To keep it that way, there will be a Neighborhood Watch meeting at the West Laurel Community Building on Monday, September 30th at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will cover basic principles of Neighborhood Watch, such as what to look for and when to call 911, and will provide an update on what is happening in West Laurel.

See you at the General Meeting on October 17th ~ **Cpl James Beasock**

2013-2014 Membership Drive

I'd like to start by thanking the families of West Laurel for your phenomenal response to last year's membership drive. When the WLCA began a planned membership effort several years ago, less than 25% of our households were paying their annual dues. We thank those sustaining members most sincerely ~ your support allowed us to continue our programs in the community now and during our lean years. In the past three years, we have revamped our campaign and added an individual letter to our door knocking and HOTLINE efforts. Last year, our dues-paying members reached our goal of 600, 35% of our residents, with many of you giving a donation in addition to your dues.

Your support allows the WLCA to collectively address the key needs and concerns of our community in order to keep West Laurel the desirable place to live that it is. These activities include zoning, code adherence, legislative action, safety, environment, education and recreation, and outreach to seniors.

Once again, this year's support has been requested via an invoiced statement to each West Laurel household at the cost of \$15.00 per household membership. A single membership enrolls an entire household for the period spanning September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2014. If you haven't yet responded to your invoiced mailing, please do so to keep WLCA running smoothly. Sometimes mail in our homes disappears; if this has happened to your WLCA membership mailing, several options are available:

- Mail a \$15 check payable to WLCA to Susan Railey, 16922 Melbourne Drive, Laurel MD 20707
- You may also use PayPal to pay your dues, \$16. A hotlink is on the WLCA main page (www.wlcaweb.org).
- Of course you can always pay your dues in person at the October 17th General meeting.

Many thanks for your support and I look forward to seeing everyone in October.

Tony Spezio, Membership Coordinator

2013-2014 Proposed WLCa Budget

Each year the General Membership reviews and then votes on the annual budget. This year there have been minimal changes to the budget. As in past years, the largest cost is the printing and mailing of our annual HOTLINE. We were able to bring last year in under budget by avoiding Zoning and Legal fees.

EXPENSES	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14
	Approved	Actual	Approved	Actual	Proposed
Hotline	5,000	4,359	5,000	4,490	5,000
PO Box	120	144	150	144	150
PO Permit & Fee	0	0	0	0	0
Cub Scout Sponsorship	300	300	300	300	300
Boy Scouts	100	100	100	100	100
Laurel Fire Department	150	150	150	150	150
Laurel Rescue Squad	150	150	150	150	150
LHS Grad Night Donation	100	100	100	100	100
West Laurel Rag Tag Band	100	100	75	100	75
Bond Mill ES PTA Carnival	75	75	100	75	100
Laurel 4th of July Committee	100	100	100	100	100
PG/MoCo Civ Assoc Dues	50	0	50	0	50
Office Supplies	250	58	200	94	100
Zoning & Legal Fees	500	1,148	500	0	500
Liability Policy	250	210	250	210	250
Good Neighbor Award	150	50	150	0	150
Mosquito Control	0	0	200	0	200
Refreshments	200	136	200	200	200
Membership Drive	1,200	1,053	1,400	1,436	1,500
Misc Expenses	400	200	200	150	200
Total	9,195	8,433	9,375	7,799	9,375

Alert! WSSC Managed Deer Hunt

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) Deer Management Program includes nine hunting areas surrounding Triadelphia and T. Howard Duckett Reservoirs. The program is a management tool in areas where deer have exceeded the carrying capacity of the available habitat. The full schedule of Managed Hunt dates along the Rocky Gorge Reservoir is as follows:

- **Duckett Dam: Oct 25**
- **Suplee to Burtons Lane: Nov 4, Nov 25**

(Employees Only)

- Beaufort Park, Fulton: Oct 21, Nov 19, Jan 7
- Dustin Road: Oct 30, Nov 26
- Fox Haven: Dec 16
- Links Area: Oct 16, Nov 6, Nov 21
- Reservoir Overlook: Dec 20

For all dates the time is from around (dawn) 5 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Dumpster Day—November 16th

Dumpster Day will return to West Laurel on Saturday, November 16th, courtesy of the West Laurel Civic Association and the Prince George's County Waste Management Division. The dumpsters will be available from 8:30am until 12:30 pm (or until the dumpsters are full) in the parking lot of the West Laurel Community Building.

Hazardous materials and electronics will not be accepted. This includes used oil, oil-based paint, tires, propane tanks, glass/mirrors, 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. You need to call or email Jason Float, at 443-878-6360 or jason.float@gmail.com, in advance 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 Float know. We need folks willing to donate their pickup trucks and time.

Volunteers from the West Laurel Civic Association will direct cars to the dumpsters and lend assistance in filling them. If you are willing to help at the community center to direct traffic, we need you to be there between 8am to 12:30pm. High school students may volunteer and receive community service credit hours. Call or email Melissa at 301-776-2314 or mdaston@verizon.net to volunteer at the dumpster site.

We have added a third dumpster to accommodate everyone but the rule still stands -- the dumpsters are available until 12:30 pm or until all three are full. Signs will be posted to direct vehicles as they enter and exit the parking lots. Start planning your fall housecleaning now.

West Laurel Recreation Council

The Recreation Council is sponsoring the following events. Mark your calendars!

December 6 - Winter Holiday Party
February 7 - Family Swim Night
April 5 - Egg Hunt
June 6 - Ice Cream Social 6/6

We are always looking for volunteers to help with planning, setup, running part of an event, and cleanup. Of special note, the Recreation Council is looking for a Treasurer. The job entails managing our checking account (approx 12 check/year), picking up bank statements from our P.O. Box and attending monthly meetings.

If you have questions or are interested, contact Cynthia Atkins, brightbaskets@yahoo.com, or Rush Kester, rwkester@aol.com.

Parks & Recreation News

The M-NCPPC offers recreational programs across both counties. Registration for Prince George's County and Montgomery County programs is now underway. Browse the Fall programs and events by going to:

- Prince George's County:
<http://www.pgparcs.com/>
- Montgomery County:
<http://www.montgomeryparcs.org/>

The Laurel-Beltsville Senior Activity Center (part of Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation) also hosts a myriad of programs including fitness, ceramics, wood working, computer labs, free movies, dancing and much more. Stop by and pick up their activity list.

Code Enforcement

Some of the most frequent calls WLCA Board members receive are from neighbors wanting to report homes that are not up-to-code. To be honest, the Board appreciates knowing about the issue and in the past it was difficult to know what office to call. With the new 311 systems in both counties, residents can now easily report problems yourselves. If you see any of the issues below, please call it in.

Montgomery County residents have had the county 311 service (out of county 240-777-0311) which takes telephone calls 24/7.



Prince George's County residents may use either the on-line CountyClick 311 on-line form (www.CountyClick311.com) or call 311 (out of county 301-883-4748) to report problems.

All of West Laurel is zoned as residential except Tommy's Shell station (zoned Commercial). Rocky Gorge Animal Hospital is permitted in the R-80 zone. The rest of the community is strictly residential and consists of homes that are R-R (Rural Residential) or R-80 (quarter acre lots).

Here are the answers to the most commonly asked questions:

- Fences and walls (including retaining walls more than six feet high) shall meet the setback requirements for main buildings. On lots one acre or less fences shall be no more than four feet high unless the homeowner requests a variance. Fences higher than four feet require a building permit.
- Rooming houses are not permitted in R-80 zoning. They are permitted in R-R zones.
- Rental of guest rooms (by the principal resident to non-family members) is permitted to not more than three persons in a family of related individuals, 1 individual, or 2 unrelated individuals.
- Property owners are responsible for disposal of garbage and rubbish, the extermination of insects, rats, vermin, or other pests in all areas of the property, and ensuring grass is kept less than 12" in height.
- Every exterior surface, wall, and foundation shall be free of holes, breaks, loose or rotting boards, timbers, or other materials, and any conditions which might admit rain or dampness to the interior portions of the walls. All exterior surface materials, including wood, composition, cinder block, or metal siding, shall be maintained in a weather-proof condition, properly surface-coated, and free of graffiti.
- It shall be unlawful for a person to apply graffiti to any natural or artificial surface on publicly-owned property or to any natural or artificial surface of privately-owned property without the prior authorization and consent of the owner of the property. The owner of property upon which graffiti has been applied shall remove the graffiti within ten calendar days after it was applied.
- Roofs and drainage systems shall be structurally sound and tight and without defects which might admit rain or cause dampness or deterioration in the interior portion of the building. Roof water shall not be discharged in a manner which creates a private or public nuisance or violates ordinances relating to stormwater management. (You cannot direct water from your property to your neighbors' properties.)
- Signs placed on a municipal, County, or State street right-of-way, except those of, or authorized by, public authorities or agencies, unless specifically authorized are illegal.



WSSC Projects In and Around West Laurel

Barbara Sollner-Webb (Vice-President, WLCA) attended the WSSC public meeting in mid-September on the large amount of sewer work they will soon be doing in the area. This includes, within West Laurel, approximately 70 sewer projects at 30 general locations and 40 manhole projects at 9 general locations, some within streets and some in forests/wetlands. This "Sewer Repair, Replacement and Rehabilitation (SR3)" work is legally required under the Consent Decree and must be completed by 2015. We are awaiting further information but the information we have is below.

To see the full map of upcoming projects go to <http://gisweb.wsscwater.com/InYourNeighborhood/> and zoom into West Laurel. The further you zoom in, the more details are available as seen in the graphic below.

Patuxent Raw Water Pipeline Contract No. BF1582E91 (Project Manager: Cheryl Young). Preliminary Project Design is complete as of September 20 2013. Underground utility location work will start in October 2013. Construction is expected to begin in mid 2014. Primary impact to the community will be traffic detours and lane closures along Brooklyn Bridge Road and Bond Mill Road. Neighbors have been assured streets will be repaved in accordance with county requirements, after the project is complete. County Council Member Lehman has inserted such language into WSSC's FY 2013 budget.

Patuxent Raw Water Pipeline Cleaning Contract No. BF1582C91 (Project Manager: April Wilt) The work is completed. Restoration of the impacted areas is in progress.

Consent Decree - Sewer Rehabilitation Contract No. CI5183A11 (Project Manager: Walid Halboni) About 400 linear feet of sewer on Parkway Drive must be rehabilitated. There would be some traffic

control on Parkway Drive. Start of construction is significantly delayed.

T. Howard Duckett Dam Project (Project Manager: Lee Greenwald) The contractor has completed the parapet wall on the Prince George's County side of the dam, and has placed the fill for the earth berm on the Prince George's County side of the dam. Contractor is working on the Howard County side. The substantial completion date is currently 12/19/2014. The contractor continues work on the lower side of the dam. The project is mandated by MDE to reinforce the dam to withstand a Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) of 10,000 years. The impact on West Laurel residents remains approximately 18 dump trucks per day during daytime work hours.

Patuxent Plant-Carbon Storage Facility (Project Manager: Kathleen M. McGinnis) A fifty-five foot (approximately 5 stories) structure to store carbon will be built on the Duckett Dam grounds near the existing brick building, the current Patuxent Pretreatment Facility to store carbon. WSSC is upgrading the carbon system as part of the Patuxent Water Filtration Plant (WFP) Phase II Expansion and UV Disinfection Facilities project. The project includes: a new state-of-the-art UV Disinfection Facility, a new electrical substation, a new Residuals Handling Facility, upgrades to existing yard piping and upgrades to chemical facilities at the Patuxent WFP as well as upgrades to the existing potassium permanganate and carbon systems at the Pretreatment Facility. Final permits were recently acquired. Final construction bid documents are being prepared. WSSC anticipates construction to begin late this year or early 2014. There will be no effect on the community. There is no specific outreach since the upgrade at the Pretreatment Facility is well within WSSC property.

Watershed Protection Study (Project Manager: Martin Chandler) The project is complete. The final report was released in November 2012, and is available on WSSC's website.

Zoning Updates

The West Laurel Civic Association has a long history of proactive work protecting the zoning outlined in the Master Plans of both Prince George's and Montgomery counties. The pressures have continued and increased even since our last update in May. The WLCA continues to engage developers and planning boards to keep the few remaining large tracts of open land zoned Rural Residential. Here is a recap of what is currently happening in and around West Laurel.

Kingdom Hall of Laurel. (Sweitzer Lane at Route 198). Work is progressing. In May the foundation had been poured and sidewalks and roadwork completed. The actual building is now under cover and in the final phase.

Tommy's Shell Station (Route 198). The WLCA met with the development team for this project at the September board meeting. The Stormwater Management Concept plan has been submitted to the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation, and work is proceeding with ten fuel pumps, a 3,180-square-foot convenience store, and a carwash. The WLCA board has raised concerns and requested the following changes to the plan: changes to the side and rear of the buildings that face West Laurel homes to lessen the industrial design impacts, confirmation that there will be no light spillage into the neighborhood, and improved landscape buffering. The plans being reviewed by the Prince George's County Planning Board on October 31 (Special Exception SE-4730) and a zoning hearing at the end of November. If there are no objections from citizens of West Laurel, there will be no hearing. The plan is to start the project in March-April 2014 and be completed in 120 days.

Eglise de Dieu (Route 198 and Riding Stable Road), formerly known as Snowden's Birmingham Manor. There has been no official word from the Montgomery County Planning Board in the past six months. Unofficial feedback is that the project

has run into problems as the lot size is only 4.5 acres and the project requires 5.0 acres. WLCA continues to monitor.

A New Life Church of Christ (corner of Brooklyn Bridge and Leo James Court). The WLCA Board has met with this church twice to discuss their initial design. The church is a small church, less than 2,500 square feet, and is permitted within the existing zoning. Based on recommendations from WLCA the church is redesigning the plan to place parking lots adjacent to Brooklyn Bridge and Leo James and increasing the green space between the residential homes adjacent to the property.

Avalon Manor (Joyce Lane). After a significant lull in this project, it is now underway again with lots and homes for sale.

Reaching Hearts (Brooklyn Bridge Road). The WLCA met with the development team for Reaching Hearts twice this summer to discuss their plans. The overall size of the project has been reduced and will be done in three phases. The plan is to build a sanctuary, kitchen/storage facility and parking for 240 vehicles in phase 1, followed by a gym/multipurpose building and classrooms for a total of 32,235 square feet. When completed the sanctuary will seat 850, have 365 parking spaces, and cover 21+% of the 17.4 acres. The back of the property is to remain wooded. Although this is a large project, the WLCA is pleased that it has been downsized significantly from the initial proposal.

The project is underway. Reaching Hearts filed a preliminary plan (4-13006) to subdivide the property which is undergoing a 140-day review. This will be followed by a 6 to 8 month planning process (Sep 13-May 14) with building to begin in June 2014. I encourage every interested resident to become a party of record by going to the Prince George's Planning Board at http://www.pgplanning.org/Resources/Person_of_Record.htm. (continued on page 11)

Zoning Updates (continued)

Our concerns have focused on traffic safety, design issues that directly impact nearby residents, and environmental impacts. Our response to the RHI team after the second meeting was posted on the community discussion board.

Gudelsky Property (southwest corner of Bond Mill and Route 198). The proposal is for an indoor-outdoor soccer facility consisting of one indoor facility, one outdoor field, a 3-story club house, and 200 parking spaces. The WLCA board liked the overall concept but expressed concern over environmental and traffic impacts. No formal paperwork has been submitted.

Burtonsville Master Plan. As reported in the last HOTLINE, WLCA supports some elements of the plan particularly the area west of old route 29, and disagrees with the proposal to create high density development on the east side of old route 29. The WLCA continues to monitor Montgomery County planning board activity for future work.

Iager Farm/Maple Farm (south side of Route 216, Fulton) had petitioned the Howard County Zoning Board to reclassify their remaining farmland to allow high-density development from Route 216 south to the Patuxent River. The WLCA provided written and oral input to the Howard County Council and advocated that the

land remain rural residential. In July, the Howard County council voted to grant the property a combination of mixed-use and low-density zoning or a mix of commercial along Route 216 and approximately 180 homes (2 per acre).

Fairland Park (Old Gunpowder Road and Route 198) is moving forward with their development which spans both Prince George's and Montgomery counties. In June, the Artery Group announced a 510-lot golf course community in partnership with Ryland Homes. Fairland represents the development of one of the last remaining large land tracts available in eastern Montgomery County.

Konterra (Old Gunpowder, Virginia Manor). Two members from the WLCA along with representatives from Beltsville, Calverton, Vansville, and other community groups are serving in the Konterra design review board which has held one meeting. Because of the size of Konterra, the Prince George's Planning Board approved conceptual designs for the overall project with a community-based design review board to provide inputs on specific design components. At the first meeting, the design of the initial office building to serve as a Konterra business headquarters was discussed.

Recreational Uses on the WSSC Watershed

One of West Laurel's finest features that many residents are not fully aware of is the great recreational amenities offered on WSSC's reservoirs, which run through West Laurel. For decades, WSSC has long offered us opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, shore- and boat-fishing, picnicking, organized deer hunts, and horseback riding -- and now they have added hiking.

Past HOTLINE articles covered a decision by WSSC to close their long-term equestrian trail and wanting to substantially reduce boat entry, based on environmental damage caused by recreational users.

Recreational Uses on the WSSC Watershed (continued)

An environmental study highlighted what many West Laurel residents have long commented on, WSSC was no longer maintaining the watershed. As a result of this and meetings with West Laurel and other recreational users, WSSC has reopened the watershed for recreational use. They have also begun repairing much of damage which caused the erosion. Most obvious to West Laurel residents is WSSC's gorgeous repair of the enormous washout in their firebreak west of Burtons Lane that had bothered our residents for 10 years. They also are working on adding drainage run-offs on the firebreak hills, to reduce erosion.

Area equestrians greatly appreciate being permitted to again ride on WSSC's environmentally sound trail and that WSSC's staff is now wonderfully maintaining and expanding by re-opening sections that had gotten blocked over the years by vast numbers of fallen trees. Notably, for the first time, WSSC has publicly opened this magnificent trail to hiking. West Laurel residents should go out to enjoy this 18-mile gem, a contoured path with lovely views of the reservoir. But please note that, as in past years, WSSC requires a permit (free for seniors) and users must follow their regulations.

Finally, personal motorcycles and ATVs are strictly prohibited on WSSC's firebreak and trail. If you see or hear such illegal use, please contact 911 and WSSC's police at 301-206-8888.

Housing Values - Should I Renovate?

This year has shown the highest level of homeowner equity since 2008. That gives you more opportunity to invest that equity right back into your home! Improving your home can be a great way to give it a makeover, gain extra space, or otherwise make it possible for you to stay in your home longer. But how much will these projects increase your selling price? The day may come when you want or need to sell. In preparation for that possibility, realize that not all home improvements are created equal. Some will increase the value of your home, and some will actually make selling more difficult. Here's how to tell the difference.

Projects With the Highest Resale Value. Certain projects add more resale value than others. Here are some that generally have the best financial impact.

- **Kitchens.** People like to see modern conveniences and styles in the kitchen. Especially in older homes, kitchen improvements tend to add solid value.
- **Bathrooms.** Second to kitchen remodels are bathroom remodels. Again, modernizing older styles usually results in good return.
- **Outdoor improvements/Curb Appeal.** First impressions really count, so sprucing up your home's exterior is always a smart investment.
- **Roofs and windows.** Roofs and windows are expensive to replace, and buyers expect these to be in

good condition. Unfortunately, that means that while replacing them won't dramatically increase resale value, *not* replacing them could significantly decrease it.

Projects That Can Negatively Affect Resale Value.

Although it may seem surprising, almost any project has the potential to negatively affect resale value. A general rule is that the more personal your choices are -- meaning they're made to suit your particular lifestyle or taste -- the less likely they are to have a positive effect on resale value.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't do the project. It just means you shouldn't expect it to add value to your home and should anticipate that your home may be more difficult to sell as a result. These include luxury upgrades, rooms that do not fit with your floor plan, and garage conversions. Also, a safe bet is to make sure that your changes conform to the neighborhood and that the upgrades fit in with the rest of the house.

For detailed info on what you can expect to recoup, visit Remodeling Online's Cost vs. Value Report at www.remodeling.hw.net/2013/costvsvalue/division/south-atlantic.aspx. A local Realtor can best advise on the most beneficial upgrades/improvements to your home. For more ideas and a list of reputable, local contractors, please contact me at Lenora@LNF.com.

ICC Update

The contractor continues work on the retaining wall and expects it to be complete next week, weather permitting. The replacement sound barrier panels are still scheduled for installation in mid-September. The sound barrier work will begin with the installation of the columns that go in between the panels.

The work will occur predominantly Monday through Saturday between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM. Please be aware that workers will need to move vehicles and equipment at the start and end of each workday so you

may hear some additional activity outside of these work hours.

Please do **not** enter the construction zones and be careful when traveling near the construction zones. Also, talk with your children about the dangers of a construction zone and make sure they know not to enter the orange construction fence.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding construction, please contact Ms. Genevieve Rubrecht, at [301.586.9244](tel:301.586.9244) or at grubrecht@iccproject.com.

Rain Tax

Many of you should have noticed on your annual Prince George's County taxes a new itemized line, Clean Water Act Fee. For my house, I was charged \$41.48. So what is this fee and why is the county hitting homeowners up for more money? Last year, Governor Martin O'Malley signed into law House bill 987 (The Watershed Protection and Restoration Program) which requires nine counties and the city of Baltimore to collect a fee from property owners to meet the Federal Clean Water Act standards to address stormwater runoff. For many of us in West Laurel, we are fiercely protective of the Rocky Gorge watershed but not all others are as observant.

The new funds will go to treat uncontrolled pavement -- parking lots, roads, and roofs that need to be retrofitted to filter pollutants from the stormwater. While this program will create jobs, the WLCA has long believed in and lobbied for more stringent building codes to address these issues, smarter growth to prevent additional roadways and pavement, support for alternative transportation (buses, bike lanes, train, metro, carpools), and reduction of the amount of impervious (paved) coverage. We have been able to influence several projects in West Laurel this summer to reduce their footprints and environmental impacts.

In Prince George's County, if you believe your property "Rain Tax" was miscalculated, contact 301-883-5810. You may also participate in the Rain Check Rebate program to reduce your fee by installing cisterns, planting a rain garden, installing permeable pavement, using rain barrels, planting trees, and removing pavement. The Department of Environmental Resources will be holding an information session on October 3, from 7-9pm, at the Laurel-Beltsville Senior Center.

Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection also sponsors a RainScapes Rewards Rebates Program that offers property owners rebates. The current maximum rebate is \$2,500 and it has limited funding using a first-come first-served approach to the rebates. For more information go to <http://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/Rainscapes/>



What Happens to My Recycling After It's Picked Up?

Ever since the presentation on Prince George's single stream recycling program, at a West Laurel Civic Association General Meeting several years ago, several residents have been curious how it really worked. This was nicely answered at a recent tour of the Prince George's MRF (Materials Recovery Facility) off branch Avenue organized by the Sierra Club.

It was fascinating, and I was very impressed how professional and evidently successful it seems to be. You also might enjoy taking an opportunity to tour the plant and see how their enormous mechanical separators work, sorting the glass, paper, plastics, bi-metal and aluminum cans, aided by a lot of people hand-picking mis-sorted items from the moving conveyor belts.

Interesting factoids about our recycling program:

- They take all paper (letters, ads, newspapers, telephone directories, paper bags, cardboard boxes, etc), except when glued to plastic or badly food-soiled. However, they now also take envelopes with see-through plastic address windows.
- They take clear and colored glass, all metal cans and containers (please rinse out the food to avoid rodents and insects) and all recyclable plastics (indicated by a #1 through #7 stamped

in the bottom inside a double triangle), coat hangers, laundry soap bottles, antifreeze bottles.

- Loose plastic bags are a bane for the sorters. You are encouraged to bag your plastic food bags and newspaper wrappers and drop them off at the plastic bag recycling box of your local food store rather than send them to the MRF.
- Model food composting facilities are being established at several locations in the county. Hopefully food scraps and food-soiled paper and cardboard will soon be collected county-wide, too. But in the meantime, composting your own food scraps your garden and cutting out the small greasy part of a pizza box so you can recycle the rest are great stop-gaps.

The county is also starting to require recycling at businesses, as they have at homes and apartments, and is working toward a recycling program for building construction materials (thank you, Councilwoman Mary Lehman!).

Several jurisdictions are striving to achieve 90% trash diversion (termed "zero waste", through recycling, re-use, composting, etc, coupled with social outreach and proactive policies). <zero-waste-pg> is an organization striving for our county to be the zero waste leader in the state.

Prince George's County Yard Waste Updates

Effective January 1, 2014 yard waste will no longer be accepted in plastic bags.

Yard waste—leaves, grass, brush, and other trimmings — must be placed in paper yard trim bags available at most grocery and home improvement stores. You may continue to use a trash can marked "Yard Trim" to save money.

Yard waste is collected year round.

As a reminder, there is NO leaf pickup scheduled this fall. You must bag your leaves and put them out with your yard waste.

The County provides back door collection for senior citizens and the disabled. To qualify, no one living in the home can be under 65 years of age or be physically able to carry the containers to the curb. Call 311 to make arrangements.

2013-2014 WLCA Board Members

WLCA OFFICERS			
President	Melissa Daston	301-776-2314	pres@wlcaweb.org
1st Vice President	Cassandra Hostetler	301-498-0894	vp1@wlcaweb.org
2nd Vice President	Barbara Sollner-Webb	301-604-5619	vp2@wlcaweb.org
Rec. Secretary	Tom Dernoga	410-792-0332	secretary@wlcaweb.org
Treasurer	Susan Railey	301-490-7172	treasurer@wlcaweb.org
AREA REPRESENTATIVES			
AREA I (2-year)	Tom Sidor	301-604-8023	area1a@wlcaweb.org
(1-year)	John Hebert	301-549-1129	area1b@wlcaweb.org
Alternate	Kevin Reich	301-490-4881	area1c@wlcaweb.org
AREA II (2-year)			
(1-year)	Patty Sobel	443-250-7838	area2b@wlcaweb.org
Alternate			
AREA III (2-year)	Mike McPherson	301-776-5021	area3a@wlcaweb.org
(1-year)	Ryan Faggard	301-979-9665	area3b@wlcaweb.org
Alternate	Lars Kvale	240-568-8976	Area3c@wlcaweb.org
AREA IV (2-year)	Lucy Grimes	301-490-0414	area4a@wlcaweb.org
(1-year)	Tony Spezio	301-498-3436	area4b@wlcaweb.org
Alternate	Jason Float	443-878-6360	area4d@wlcaweb.org
Alternate	Doris Reynold	301-490-8639	
AREA V (2-year)	Elizabeth Schwartz	301-776-0542	area5c@wlcaweb.org
(1-year)	Steve Steenrod	301-725-6835	area5b@wlcaweb

Wanted! Volunteers for the West Laurel Board . The WLCA Board has several vacancies in Area II and Area III. If you are interested in joining the Board or volunteering to work on special projects, please contact a board member.

State Highway Administration Installs Reflectors

Thank you SHA! Ever since removing the reflectors that marked the lanes on Route 198 during the widening/resurfacing project many years ago, SHA had promised to re-install such reflectors. These are very important to see the lane markings on rainy nights, especially since Route 198 now has so many lanes with lots of traffic crossing all of them to turn left on Swetizer Lane. Also, the new

smooth road surface is highly reflective at night, further obscuring painted lane markers on wet nights. Happily the SHA representative at West Laurel Civic Association's last General Meeting agreed to finally get these reflectors installed, and they now have been! Yay! This should make driving home on wet nights much safer!

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



Hotline—Fall 2013
The Neighborhood Newsletter of West Laurel