

RCHCA SPRING MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17TH, 7:30-9:00



Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association

9711 East Bexhill Drive
Kensington, MD 20895

Spring Meeting
Wednesday, May 17th, 7:30-9:00

Grace Episcopal Day School
9411 Connecticut Avenue, Kensington, MD



Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association
rchca.org

Your Neighborhood
News and Information
Spring 2006

Message from the Board

Spring is in the air, along with belated April showers.

Along with the change of season has been a change in composition of our Executive Committee of the Board, which includes Officers plus Standing Committee Chairs. Back in late January before our annual meeting, then-RCHCA Secretary Mike Baker and Alexa Freeman agreed to a form of "job rotation", expressing a desire to switch positions. Alexa was then nominated and elected Secretary on February 5, and Mike agreed to serve as our new Transportation Committee Chair, Alexa's former position.

We want to thank Mike for his long service as association Secretary. We also appreciate the fact that in addition to being a Committee Chair, he has also agreed to be moderator for our listserv "rchcanet". This lessens the load on Sam Hoxie, who for many years has been both listserv moderator and webmaster of our site at www.RCHCA.org. We also want to thank Sam for continuing to maintain our website, and in addition, for her major commitment of time and effort preparing our new 2006 Rock Creek Hills Community Directory.

This new Community Directory will replace one that is now three years old. The directory's main purpose is to keep residents informed on who their neighbors are and how to get in touch with them. It does this by providing a cross listing of resident's names and phone numbers, both by street and alphabetically. The directory also provides a wealth of information about Rock Creek Hills, including our community's history, a description of Covenants, our Home Improvement Approval Checklist, RCHCA Constitution and By Laws, and a list of useful phone numbers (government, emergency, hospital, school, hotline, and utilities). It also contains some advertisements from community businesses, to help defray publication expenses.

Our Spring meeting date was recently changed to May 17, to accommodate the need of our host, Grace Episcopal Day School. There are two main topics on the agenda for that meeting, both of which are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter:

- **Traffic Survey:** A County video will be presented on traffic calming policies and procedures to address speeding problems. Mike Baker will be there to answer questions on these, as well as other types of problems such as cut-through traffic that may be part of a formal Traffic Survey request. Residents are encouraged to identify specific locations with such problems at the meeting to be included in our request for a Traffic Survey. No solutions involving structures such as speed humps will be imposed without an association vote, which would only occur at a subsequent meeting.
- **Traffic Triangle Renovation:** Shannon Hamm will explain and propose a new policy for soliciting and approving various traffic triangle renovation projects. The first location with a request for renovation is the triangle at Haverhill Drive and Littledale Drive. A vote to consider this request will be held at the May 17 meeting.

Volunteers for our standing committees are essential to operate as we have come to expect. For new residents, this is an excellent way to get to know your neighbors, and find out what's happening that can affect you. Please contact any association officer for more information, and plan on attending our next meeting on May 17. Babysitting is provided. Hope to see you there!

<i>President</i>	Joe Rosenberg
<i>Vice President</i>	Shannon Hamm
<i>Treasurer</i>	Bob MacDowall
<i>Secretary</i>	Mike Baker
<i>Past President</i>	David Hall

Next Meeting

The RCHCA Spring Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 17, 2006 at Grace Episcopal Day School, 9411 Connecticut Ave.

Please note: The meeting date was changed to May 17 from our original date of May 10. We usually hold our May and October meetings on the second Wednesday of the month; **however, the meeting was changed to May 17 due to conflicts in scheduling with Grace Episcopal.**

The meeting will run from 7:30 – 9:00 pm. Babysitting will be provided.

Agenda items include:

- Traffic Survey: A video presentation and explanation of County policies and procedures on traffic calming measures. Residents are encouraged to identify specific locations with problems like speeding and cut-through traffic at the meeting for inclusion in a study that RCHCA will request.
- Traffic Triangle Renovation: An explanation of a new renovation policy and a proposal for a first renovation project at the Haverhill Drive and Littledale Drive triangle. A vote seeking approval for this will be held at the May 17 meeting.

We welcome volunteers to help in set-up and clean-up of the event. Please contact Joe Rosenberg at 301-495-9821 or jrosenberg@comcast.net if you are interested in helping.

Traffic Committee Report

Mike Baker, chair of Traffic Committee

The Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) has two programs to address traffic on residential streets. The Residential Traffic Calming Program (http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/trstmpl.asp?url=/content/dpwt/operations/traffic/speed_calming.asp) is oriented toward reducing speeding on residential streets, without restricting access to those streets. Access restrictions (e.g. turn restrictions) are oriented toward reducing cut through traffic. Both programs have criteria that a street must meet to qualify. The criteria for access restrictions are much more stringent than for traffic calming.

For a residential street to meet the criteria for calming devices it must generally meet the following criteria:

- The posted speed limit must be either 25 or 30 MPH.
- The street must be designated Primary Residential, or Secondary Residential, in the Master Plan. A link to the current (1989) Kensington-Wheaton Communities Master Plan, which covers Rock Creek Hills, is available at: http://www.mc-mncppc.org/community/plan_areas/georgia_avenue/intro.shtm
- Traffic volume must have a peak hour traffic volume of 100 cars per hour
- The 85th percentile speed on Primary Residential streets must be at least 9 miles per hour over the posted limit.
- The 85th percentile speed on Secondary Residential streets must be at least 7 miles per hour over the posted speed limit.

In order for a street to be considered for the Traffic Calming Program, the Citizen's Association representing the street must request that the DPWT perform a traffic survey to see if they qualify. The request should specify the blocks of a street and peak traffic time for the survey. In response to a request for a traffic survey, DPWT will monitor traffic for a two hour period, with the specified time slot in the middle.

The Board of Directors of Rock Creek Hills Citizen's Association plans on asking DPWT to conduct a traffic survey of the streets listed below to see if they qualify for the Traffic Calming Program. The streets selected were identified by the neighborhood traffic survey conducted by RCHCA late in 2004.

- Elrod Road, if additional detail (block(s), peak volume, and peak time) is identified before or at the May 17th meeting.
- Kensington Parkway between Beach Drive and Saul Road, during the time period 8:00 to 9:00 AM, or a time period to be identified at the May 17th meeting.
- Old Spring Road, if additional detail (block(s), peak volume, and peak time) is identified before or at the May 17th meeting.
- Saul Road, if additional detail (block(s), peak volume, and peak time) is identified before or at the May 17th meeting.
- Stonybrook Drive between the bridge over the CSX tracks and La Duke Drive during the time period 8:00 to 9:00 AM
- Additional streets/blocks proposed at the May 2006 meeting of RCHCA.

Note: Please provide information about streets/blocks to be included in the survey either at the May 17, 2006 RCHCA meeting, or prior to the meeting via email to MikeBaker@comcast.net.

continued on next page

Requesting the traffic survey does not commit the association to accepting any recommended traffic calming measures. Following the traffic survey, DPWT will present the results at a general meeting of Rock Creek Hills Citizen's Association. At that time, the Association can determine if it would like to pursue the traffic calming measure. Some measures (e.g. speed humps) require additional approval by the residents of the affected streets.

Access restrictions are not currently being considered by RCHCA. The major reasons for not considering them are: resident opposition to access restrictions, as evidenced in messages posted on RCHCAnet concerning the access restrictions imposed by the Town of Kensington; the more stringent requirement for access restrictions; and recognition that the streets are public right of ways.

Additional items related to RCHCA traffic concerns are:

1. A film discussing traffic calming measures, produced for DPWT, will be presented at the May 17th RCHCA meeting. This brief film (approximately 20 minutes) discusses the traffic calming measures.

This film is also presented following a Traffic Survey.

2. The Board of RCHCA requested that the SMART unit (Speed Monitoring Awareness Radar Trailer - flashing speed display) be deployed on Stonybrook Drive, and on Kensington Parkway. Additional requests for deployment of the SMART unit may be made directly with DPWT by calling 240.777.6000, or via the RCHCA Traffic Committee (Send a request to MikeBaker@comcast.net).

Please note that the County has several requirements about where the unit may be located (e.g. distance from an intersection, distance from advisory signs, line of sight, etc.).

3. The Traffic Committee Report in the Winter 2006 RCHCA newsletter mentioned that traffic cameras were not an option; but in January, the state legislature overrode the Governor's veto, allowing Montgomery County to use speed cameras in a pilot project. Additional information may be found in article published February 1, 2006 by the Montgomery Gazette. http://www.gazette.net/stories/020106/montcou182411_31905.shtml

Traffic Calming References

Please note that some pages on the County's web site reference a discontinued program (Community Speed Watch Program).

Residential Speed Hump Program Evaluation Process and Application Guidelines:

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/trstmpl.asp?url=/content/dpwt/Operations/Traffic/speed_humps.asp

Residential Traffic Calming Devices:

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/trstmpl.asp?url=/content/dpwt/Operations/Traffic/speed_calmddevices.asp

Residential Traffic Calming Program:

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/trstmpl.asp?url=/content/dpwt/operations/traffic/speed_calming.asp

Traffic Calming Measures that can be considered on Residential Streets and Arterial Roads:

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/trstmpl.asp?url=/content/dpwt/Operations/Traffic/speed_roadtypes.asp

Get Involved With Neighbors Who Enjoy Making a Difference

Consider participating as much or as little as your time and interest permit: Join or lead one of our 6 standing committees:

- Building & Covenants
- Communications
- Legislative Planning & Zoning
- Health & Environment
- Special Events
- Transportation

RCHCA Directory Updates

A new edition of the Rock Creek Hills Citizens Association directory is currently being prepared. Letters containing the current listings have been mailed to all RCHCA households, requesting updates of residents' names, phone numbers, or email addresses.

Please remember to send any updates to Sam Hoxie either by email to samhoxie@comcast.net or by regular mail to Sam Hoxie, 9711 E. Bexhill Dr., Kensington, MD 20895

The deadline for receipt of your updates is May 17th.

Renovation of Rock Creek Hills Triangles

The Board has received a request to improve the triangle at Haverhill Drive and Littledale Drive. The Board proposed at the January 2006 meeting that we would come forward with a proposal for renovating this triangle at the May 2006 meeting. This article is to give notice that the Board is seeking a vote on expenditures of funds of approximately \$1900.



Traffic Triangle at Littledale and Haverhill

The proposal supports the professional installation of landscaping and annual maintenance. Installation of amended soils, plants and hardscaping is proposed at approximately \$1900. The current estimated costs to maintain the triangles that requires a landscaper is between \$200-300 every 3-5 years. The Board is not going to support annual maintenance fees exceeding \$500, and has requested from the professional landscapers an annual estimate. In addition, the Board understands that there are a number of local residents that will provide upkeep of the triangle on an ongoing basis. The committee is lead by Winnie Holbrook, as well as others. If you want to volunteer to participate in the triangle renovation effort at Haverhill and Littledale, please contact Winnie at is 301-962-9050, email address is winniekh@aol.com.

As the Board receives requests for any additional triangle renovations, we will work with the committee on triangle renovations to review the proposals and put those proposals forward for a vote by the membership. The Board will prioritize requests for renovations both by the order of their requests as well as the commitment from nearby residents on continued upkeep for the triangles. This is consistent with how the request for renovation on Haverhill and Littledale is being handled. Each new request for another triangle renovation will be presented to the Association for a vote. To send in new requests, please contact Shannon Hamm at shannonhamm@comcast.net.

There are seven (7) triangles in our boundaries. The triangles include:

- McNeely triangle at Saul and Elrod
- Saul and Haverhill
- Haverhill and Littledale (1st in renovation queue)
- East Bexhill and Hawick Ct
- Elrod and Hawick Ct
- Elrod and Old Spring
- Kent and East Bexhill

The Board understands the importance of improving these amenities, and would like the support of the citizens' association.

Train Noise Update

A consultant's report on the feasibility and cost of establishing a Quiet Zone at the Forest Glen-Linden Lane intersection has been completed. The study was done for the County's Department of Public Works and Transportation, (DPWT), following a request by County Councilmember Silverman's office. DPWT is now preparing its own summary of the facts along with this study for submittal to Councilmember Silverman.

Although the study will not be available for a few more weeks, the basic results are known, and they are mixed. Because of site-specific limitations, the least expensive solutions that could replace the audible sounding of train horns are not feasible (i.e., median barriers and longer arms on the existing gates). The only structural solution that would permit a full Quiet Zone solution is four-quadrant gates, and the cost for these may approach a half million dollars.

However, a much less expensive solution, on the order of \$60-\$70k, is feasible. The so-called "wayside horn" system is mounted at the crossing, rather than on the locomotive, and according to the manufacturer has been tested to reduce noise above the 90 decibel level by 98%! Even if this claim is a bit optimistic, it still may offer the most realistic and cost-effective solution available. This alternative solution is included in the study findings. Once the study is delivered, efforts will be made to address possible funding sources.

Rock Creek Hills Park Improvements

The Association is receiving improvements at the park at Haverhill Drive and Saul Road this spring. The Board submitted a request for a capital improvement project about 6 years ago. The Board received a call from the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission about the request. Dr. Parviz Izajdoo, Project Manager at MNCPPC participated in our January meeting to present plans. They are posted on our website. Currently we will be receiving the following upgrades:

- (1) Pavilion near the tennis courts with picnic tables;
- (2) water fountain near the stairs to the lower parking lot;
- (3) screening for the porta pottys and an additional porta potty placed at the far end of the parking lot;
- (4) grills at the west end of the basketball court;
- (5) new park benches;
- (6) many more shade trees around the playground and the soccer fields; and
- (7) the extension of the sidewalk on the park side from Haverhill Drive up to the Park entrance.

The Board will also purchase a new doggie mitt dispenser for the park and will agree to maintain the bags.

RCHCA Treasurer's Report

The RCHCA Treasurer will present a detailed report on the RCHCA financial status (Jan. - March 2006) at the May 17 meeting. Summarizing that report:

Initial account balance:	\$23,924.00
Income:	8,613.00
Expenses:	1,377.00
Final account balance:	31,160.00

As of April 22, 2006, 240 RCHCA households have paid dues.

A second request for payment of dues was mailed along with the request for updates to the RCHCA Directory during the week of April 16. Please contact Bob MacDowall, Treasurer, with any questions related to RCHCA dues at phone 301-942-5845 or email bobmacd@comcast.net

RCHCA End of Summer Concert in the Park

We will have a concert in the park in September. The date will be posted on our website (www.rchca.org), once a permit is approved. The concert will be on a Sunday afternoon from 4 to 6 pm. Please bring chairs and a picnic dinner. This is a wonderful family event.