



Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association
rchca.org

Your Neighborhood
News and Information
Winter 2007

Message from the Board

We hope that everyone had a good holiday season, and that we have all gotten off to a fresh start in the New Year.

Rather than remind people once again of reasons why RCHCA exists as an organization, anyone who attended our fall meeting saw the importance of having a forum to address the sometimes controversial issues of common concern. Traffic Safety measures were on the agenda once again at a special meeting held on October 26. Following a second presentation on traffic calming measures by a County official (the previous one being at the May general meeting), we had an extended Q&A session, a general discussion where everyone who wished to speak had an opportunity to do so, and finally, voting. Although we were asked to allow attendance by non-RCHCA citizens who might be affected by traffic calming measures, the right to vote on allowing the process to go forward was restricted to paid up members of RCHCA.

After much discussion and debate, a motion was proposed to allow the process to move forward, which was passed. Based on comments received by a number of residents, the Board is gratified by the civility exhibited in exchanging views that were often pointed, sometimes emotional, but overall, consistent with how a democratic process should work. Interested residents are encouraged to read the Traffic Calming Meeting Update in this newsletter, as well as to visit our website (www.rchca.org) and read the meeting summary and related information on the traffic survey itself.

More recently, we've had an upsurge in e-mail "traffic" (of a non-vehicular nature) on yet another controversial issue: Posting policy on RCHCANet. Here too, opinions range widely on what type of information should be allowed on our list serve, and how any restrictive policies should be enforced. In keeping with our democratic procedures, we will be discussing this issue at the Annual meeting and hopefully, resolving this by a voting majority. An article on that topic is contained elsewhere in this newsletter.

One change that we are announcing is that of our meeting location. For years we've been meeting at Grace Episcopal Day School, but it has a steady customer for the all-purpose room on both Wednesday and Saturday evenings, the two nights that we have traditionally met. (RCHCA traditionally holds two general meetings on the second Wednesdays in both May and October, and a third, annual meeting on the last Saturday in January). A short blurb on our new location is also in our newsletter (St. Paul's United Methodist Church).

As we begin the new year, the Board wishes again to remind people that this is your association. We can only function based on the time and effort of volunteers. We urge more Rock Creek Hills residents to become active Association participants, and invite you to contribute your energy and imagination as a volunteer on a committee of interest to you.

We have 6 standing committees to choose from. Please explore joining one of interest to you in whatever capacity you wish:

- BUILDING AND COVENANTS
- COMMUNICATIONS
- LEGISLATIVE, PLANNING & ZONING
- HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT
- SPECIAL EVENTS
- TRANSPORTATION

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

Next RCHCA

Pot-Luck Dinner & Meeting

Saturday, Jan. 27

Please note: The meeting location has changed. We are no longer at Grace Episcopal Day School. We are now meeting at the multi purpose room at **St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 10401 Armory Ave. in Kensington.**

The multi purpose room may be entered directly from Fawcett Street. The entrance to the multi-purpose room is marked by a gray X on the map on the back page.

Parking: On street parking is available on Armory Avenue, Fawcett Street, and Mitchell Street. Off street parking is available in the church parking lot, which is marked by a gray asterisk on the map on the back page.

The Potluck Dinner starts at 6:30pm. The Association provides pizza, chicken and drinks. Members are requested to bring a side dish, salad or dessert to share. The Annual meeting will be held from 7:30 to 9 PM. **Babysitting will be provided.**

Among the Agenda items are:

- Treasurer's Report
- Election of Officers
- Traffic Safety Update
- RCHCANet Policy

We welcome volunteers. Please contact Joe Rosenberg at 301-495-9821 or jrosenberg@comcast.net

The Future of RCHCANet

There has been some discussion on RCHCANet about the posting of "off topic" or "for sale" messages. At the January Potluck Dinner meeting we would like to discuss the future of RCHCANet.

A key issue is whether or not there are to be any limits on postings or even read-only access beyond restricting both of these only to RCHCA residents. For a number of years, we've had a list serve policy that prohibits commercial solicitations. Earlier this year we re-affirmed by an e-mail vote the policy against political fundraising but approved posting notices for a "meet and greet" the candidate meeting at someone's house. Neither of these restrictions has required much effort at enforcement.

Two problems that the Board sees with having more formal list serve policies to be enforced beyond the ones noted above are:

1. Developing and maintaining more formal list serve policies will require some dedicated time; additional volunteers will be needed.
2. If we have formal posting policies, how should they be enforced? Are all infractions equal? How many incidents of inappropriate postings should one be allowed before one's access is restricted, and for how long? If someone (hypothetically) had a "yard sale" every two weeks to sell "like new" merchandise, wouldn't this be effectively running a commercial enterprise?

The Board's opinion is that it would be preferable to loosely apply common sense principles and only have a "moderator" who can penalize the two clear "over-the-line" prohibitions on commercial enterprise solicitations (i.e., a business name and place, including home-based businesses) and political fundraisers. If, however, the community wants to have a more formal set of list serve posting policies, then the Board requests that the position of "RCHCANet Moderator" be created with authority to enforce such policies as are formally agreed upon. Most importantly, a volunteer willing to fill this position must come forth at the annual meeting and be committed to perform all related duties, including enforcement.

Some potential areas of discussion are:

- Should RCHCANet allow the posting of "for sale" messages. If "yes", should there be any limits on such postings?
- Should RCHCANet prohibit messages promoting any commercial enterprise, except for responses to requests for references?
- Should RCHCANet prohibit the posting of messages offering services that are provided by residents of Rock Creek Hills?
- Should "off topic" messages that are not "for sale" messages be allowed (e.g. non-RCHCA events)?

The intent of this discussion is to ensure that RCHCANet continues to provide a useful method of communicating with our neighbors, without being intrusive. All residents of Rock Creek Hills that have internet access, but aren't currently members of RCHCANet are encouraged to join RCHCANet. To join RCHCANet, please send an email to MikeBaker@comcast.net including your name, address, and email address.

Traffic Calming Meeting Update

On Oct. 26, a special meeting was held to consider and act upon the findings of a traffic safety study performed by the county. RCHCA made this request last spring to address traffic safety issues at various locations throughout our community. The meeting was very well attended, beginning with a presentation by the county, followed by an extensive Q&A session, and then many thoughtful expressions of individual views. The county explained that among the areas requested for consideration of traffic safety relief, only two areas qualified for traffic calming measures, one on Kensington Parkway and the other on Saul Road. For these, speed humps were proposed as the most effective solution.

Upon request by numerous residents who needed to be home by around 9 pm, a motion was put to a vote to allow attendees who stayed until at least 8:45 pm to assign their vote by written proxy to the President. That motion passed overwhelmingly. Several other motions were presented that helped to expedite the proceedings: (a) a motion to first accept only questions from the attendees, rather than allowing speeches before all of the facts were clarified; (b) a later motion allowing either speeches or questions but limited to 3 minutes per speaker; and (c) finally, after everyone had the chance to speak at least once, a motion was made to put things to a vote. The motion was whether or not to allow the process to move forward. The motion was passed by a vote of 39 to 34.

As this process continues, the county will complete the development of a speed hump location plan, and between 6 and 9 months prior to installation, Residence Concurrence forms will be distributed, seeking formal concurrence of at least 80% of the residents "...whose livability is directly affected by the traffic conditions along the streets or street sections being considered for speed hump installation." A letter was sent on November 5, 2006, asking the county to proceed in the prescribed manner. The letter is accessible at www.rchca.org.

Train Noise Update

As a reminder, last spring, the County's Dept. of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) proposed a solution based on the "wayside horn". This is a site-mounted horn that affects a much smaller area than train mounted horns, and also is required to be blown at a lower decibel level. Recall that compared with a full Quiet Zone solution, the wayside horn is much more cost-effective, and thus RCHCA endorsed it. DPWT went on to request funding for this installation (estimated to be around \$65,000) from the State Highway Administration (SHA).

On October 18, SHA sent a letter to CSX Transportation requesting confirmation that: (a) CSX train crews will be authorized not to blow the train mounted horns as long as the wayside horn is operating properly; (b) they agree to allow the needed interface for this system to work with existing circuitry; and (c) they agree to allow these devices placed on CSX's right of way. No answer has yet been received. If it appears that CSX is recalcitrant in responding, a new set of letters will be written to engage our current public officials to try and move the process toward resolution. It remains unclear at present what elements of persuasion or compulsion are available to SHA and/or our public officials. Rest assured, that no effort will be spared to obtain a satisfactory conclusion.

Babysitters Wanted for Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association Meetings

The Board is seeking names of youths in the neighborhood, who are 13 years or older, that are willing to baby-sit during the 3 meetings held each year. The first meeting is January 27, Saturday evening and is our pot luck dinner. The babysitting portion will occur during the regular meeting time from 7:30 to 9:00 pm. The spring meeting is in May, the second Wednesday and the fall meeting is in October, the second Wednesday.

Please submit possible names to Shannon Hamm at shannonhamm@comcast.net.

Rock Creek Hills Nomination Committee

The Board is seeking possible candidates to run for any of the Board positions or standing committee chairs. If you are interested in serving for any of these positions, please contact Shannon Hamm at shannonhamm@comcast.net. The current Board is willing to continue in the absence of new nominations. The Association is a voluntary organization and needs new participants to become involved in the Association. For details on positions, please visit our website at www.rchca.org.

New Location for Winter Meeting and Pot-Luck

St. Paul's United
Methodist Church
10401 Armory Avenue,
Kensington



Parking

Entrance

Park Update

The pavilion will be built at the park over the winter. The delay occurred due to contracting issues with the county. The pavilion will be located between the tennis courts and the playground toward the hill. The park maintenance crews will landscape around the pavilion. To view the plans, visit our website at www.rchca.org

Letter to MNPPC involving Public Safety

The Board wrote a letter to Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) to bring attention to concerns from residents along the Kingston and Kensington Parkway roads. The Board has heard back from MNCPPC about the public safety issues, and we have alerted WSSC, who will be responding to the abandoned pipe along Kensington Parkway. However, the Board needs to contact the Dept. of Public Works and Transportation for repair of the right of way at Kensington Parkway and Littledale. The full letter may be found on our website at www.rchca.org.

Beltway Barrier Task Force Update

After being officially designated a Committee at the last Association Meeting, we've had telephone/email contact with 3 members following the last newsletter, and another 2 persons offered their assistance at the Meeting. We are planning a short committee meeting following the holidays to discuss long term strategy and dividing up assignments. It will be a long & slow process, but we are committed to "stay the course." If you are interested in participating, please contact Bob Price via email at Robert@Pricelaw.com

RchCA
Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association

9909 East Bexhill Drive
Kensington, MD 20895

Winter Meeting and Pot-Luck

Saturday, January 27th

Potluck 6:30 Meeting 7:30-9:00

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
10401 Armory Avenue, Kensington

Note: New Location

Annual Dues Envelope Enclosed

RCHCA Treasury/Dues Status – Winter 2007

Enclosed with this newsletter is a pre-addressed envelope for payment of the 2007 Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association dues of \$35. Your dues payment supports annual RCHCA social events such as the Halloween picnic, newsletters, meeting costs, community beautification projects, the RCHCA directory, and other community activities. Please send your dues payment to:

RCHCA Treasurer, Bob MacDowall
9909 E. Bexhill Dr.
Kensington, MD 20895-3202

As of November 30, 2006, the status of the RCHCA financial accounts is:

Account balance (1/1/2006)	\$23,924.33
Total income (2006 to date)	17,200.11
Total expenditures (2006 to date)	13,852.84
Account balance (11/30/2006)	\$27,271.60

Of the total balance, \$10,000.00 is identified as reserves for future financial expenditures that RCHCA members might vote to undertake.

Enclosed in this newsletter is an annual RCHCA dues payment envelope. Your \$35.00 annual dues payment helps pay for our expenses such as the Halloween picnic and other annual events, newsletters, meeting costs, and RCHCA directories. If the envelope is missing or lost, the mailing address is:

RCHCA Treasurer, Robert MacDowall
9909 East Bexhill Dr.
Kensington, MD 20895-3202

The RCHCA board would be happy to receive your input on any matter relating to your community and citizens' association:

- Is there an activity or project that you would like to see RCHCA undertake? (If appropriate, please give us your name and email or phone number.)

- In support of this activity/project, are you available as a volunteer to assist with its successful completion?

- Are there other concerns that you would like to bring to the attention of the Board?