Maplewood Citizens Association **DRAFT MINUTES**

General Membership Meeting

Date: November 18, 2015 7:30 pm

Attendees: Allen Myers, president; Mary Jo Deering, vice-president; Hugh Barteman, treasurer; Jo Batky, secretary and approximately 25 others.

Presentation by Phil Roter, Montgomery County Cable and Broadband Services Administrator:

Mr. Roter has worked in the cable industry for 35 years, previously for a cable company and now in the county Cable Office. The office has several functions that include: management of relations with franchises including compliance issues, contracts and renewals; client-franchise problem resolution; and investigation and development of new networks and future services. The office is also involved with the FCC and future legislation.

Presently the franchise cable companies offering public cable services in Montgomery County are Comcast, Verizon and RCN. Presently Verizon has the most customers. RCN will begin servicing all county offices and schools.

Dish and Direct TV provide video services, not broadband/internet. It was noted by a resident that these services don’t work well in severe rain.

The Cable Office handles about 1000 customer problems per year. Please call them if you have a dispute with your cable company. Mr. Roter states that they resolve issues successfully and quickly!

Montgomery County’s goal is to provide a welcoming environment to competitive cable providers and other businesses requiring cable services. Most of the physical cable lines are owned by the county. There will probably be additional cable and broadband service providers in the future.

The cable industry is not a public utility so there is no rate regulation at present. The providers are all “for profit.”

Questions were addressed about high prices and complicated bills. It was suggested that you can ask about a “promotional rate.” Also, you can drop cable service and watch many shows through the internet or HULU/Amazon type services. But most sports are not available on these services. Also, you can still get local stations with a roof antenna.

For additional information or to reach the Cable Office: Montgomerycountymd.gov/cable or call: 3-1-1.

Presentation by Luis A. Gonzalez, Transportation Engineer State Highway Administration concerning Bike/Pedestrian Path:

As part of the BRAC related intersection improvements, a shared-use bike/pedestrian path is to be constructed on the east side of Old Georgetown Road between Center Drive at NIH and Charles Street. The path will connect with the existing bike trails north and south of it. Mr. Gonzalez explained some of the details of the proposed plan. A dangerous area is located at the intersection of Old Georgetown Road and Alta Vista Road because the sidewalk is narrow and visibility is poor for bikers, pedestrians and drivers. The plan is to widen the sidewalk by shifting and narrowing the median (two feet) in Old Georgetown Road. It will also cause a narrowing of Alta Vista Road at the intersection. The construction is to start and be completed in 2016. There was much discussion and debate about the pros and cons of this plan including numerous U-turns on Old Georgetown, pedestrians crossing Old Georgetown, Bethesda Mews truck traffic, etc. To discuss your opinion and get further information:

Luis A. Gonzalez; phone 410-545-8826; lgonzalez@sha.state.md.us.

Business Meeting:

Secretary’s Report: The draft minutes from the September meeting were distributed to the attendants and approved per motion by Alan Goldhammer.

Treasurer’s Report:

The report included the period September 17 to November 18, 2015. Ending balance $14481.81. Current membership is 117. The report was approved per motion by Alan Goldhammer.

Allen Myers suggested that the association members should think about usage of our treasury funds in the future.

Pooks Hill Marriott Development:

Allen and Nancy Abeles attended an informational meeting November 17th about the Quadrangle Development Corporation plan for the Pooks Hill Marriott property. There will be a “site plan” public hearing tentatively scheduled for June 30, 2016 concerning the project. Traffic is the major concern to Maplewood residents as well as parking. The plan calls for 650 residential units and 800 parking spaces. There is also a debate with the Promenade residents concerning the turn restrictions at Beech and Linden Avenues. Allen urges people to plan on attending the meeting in June.

Leaf Collection Issue: Leaves are to be collected and put in your yards adjacent to the street NOT IN THE STREET! Allen received a warning letter for leaves left in the street. The fine is $1000 for “Illegal Dumping,” for leaves in the street.

Meeting was adjourned by motion at 9:10 pm.

Draft minutes by Jo Batky, secretary