Maplewood Citizens Association

General Membership Meeting  **MINUTES**

Date: 5/18/16 7:30 pm

Attendees: Allen Myers, president; Mary Jo Deering, vice-president, Hugh Barteman, treasurer, Jo Batky, secretary and at lease 29 others.

President Allen Myers presented KOC employee Mike Naas $100 in appreciation for his continuous service to us at KOC.

Secretary’s Report: The draft minutes from the 3/16/16 meeting were distributed to attendants and approved per motion by Chip Brennan.

Treasurer’s Report: Hugh presented a revised report for 1/21/16-3/16/16 and a report for 3/17/16-5/18/16. Ending balance $12,626.30. Membership 188. The report included summary of Spring Social expenses. Total cost of Spring Social was $2064.27. Both reports approved per motion by Alan Goldhammer.

Establishment of dues for 2016-17: Motion per Dan Pierce approved to maintain MCA dues at $25/year for 2016-17.

Election of officers for MCA 2016-17: Barbara Harrison chaired the nominating committee. There were no new volunteers to run for office. All current officers agreed to serve another year and were reelected by vote.

Discussion on “Do Not Enter” signs on Linden Avenue: Numerous neighbors have complained about the excessive number of illegal turns at the intersection of Pooks Hill Road onto Linden as well as turns at Beech and Linden. The residents of The Promenade greatly desire the elimination of these turn restrictions. The Pooks Hill/Linden intersection is also a busy school bus stop. After discussion, a motion by Jeff Komarow was passed to request DOT to place “Do Not Enter” signs onto Linden from Pooks Hill in both directions during the rush hour designated hours. These signs will be in addition to the left-turn restriction signs.

Pooks Hill Marriott Development Update: The County Planning Board hearing concerning this project is tentative for late June. It should be posted on the Park and Planning webpage. The developer’s site-plan does not address traffic concerns. A motion by Chip Brennan was approved asking Allen to represent MCA in presenting testimony at the hearing concerning traffic and parking congestion. It is important that many residents of Maplewood attend the meeting to show our concerns about the project.

Presentation by Abbe Milstein on power choices, costs and Pepco-Exelon merger: Ms. Milstein is an attorney and president of the Ashburton Citizens Association. She founded PowerUpMontCo after the derecho of 2012 knocked down power lines in her neighborhood causing a prolonged power outage.

Ms. Milstein gave a fascinating presentation about her experience dealing with PEPCO, the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC), the Office of the People’s Counsel and local politicians with the goal of improving our power services and reducing the cost of power in Montgomery County.

She explained that PEPCO has been one of the worst power providers in the US. We experience numerous “blue sky outages” which means outages not related to major weather events or secondary to any event. PEPCO has continued to increase customer charges but the reliability has continued to stagnate or decrease. The PSC continues to approve PEPCO’s rate increase requests

The MD PSC has now approved the PEPCO-Exelon merger. The PSC members (mostly utility company executives) are appointed by the governor and approved by the state senate.

Exelon proposed the merger to enable the company to recover costs from a large ratepayer base to help PEPCO overcome their major deficiencies and the merger has been approved by PSC. PowerUpMontCo has filed a petition to intervene in the merger and the petition was granted. It was explained why the merger was a mistake and not in the public interest. The office of The Peoples Councel of Washington DC, the Maryland attorney general and other consumer based groups are also appealing the merger. Even after the merger, PEPCO has requested another rate increase and PowerUpMontCo is filing an intervention petition to the rate increase.

Ms. Milstein works with a small group of very generous consultants, lawyers, and economists to pursue the PowerUpMontCo goals for minimal expense. She posts information on a listserv, facebook and twitter account.

Ms. Milstein also explained distributive generation. Consumers have a choice as to what company they purchase their energy from. PEPCO distributes energy but does not generate energy. Distributive generation is not regulated by the PSC.

When questioned about political support on energy issues, Ms. Milstein suggested that one should ask candidates if they accept donations from utility companies. Maryland is one of the few states that does not either severely restrict or outright prohibit utility company donations to political entities. Massive political donations are made by utility companies to candidate and political PACs. .

This was a very informative presentation with many questions and much discussion. (Ms. Milstein assisted in editing this summary. Many thanks!)

Maplewood Village-MaryJo: There are many successful ongoing activities including walking, crafting, gardening. New activities are always welcome and will be posted on listserv.

The monthly 2nd Wednesday Hump-Day Happy Hour has been a success the past two months and will continue every month.

Allen thanked all the volunteers and wished everyone a good summer!

Meeting adjourned at 8:50.

Draft minutes by Jo Batky, secretary