



The Mapleleaf

A PUBLICATION OF THE MAPLEWOOD CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (MCA)
WWW.MAPLEWOODCITIZENS.ORG

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MARCH 2020

Meeting:

Wednesday, March 18, 2020

7:30 p.m.

Knights of Columbus/Rock Creek Mansion

5417 W. Cedar Ln.

Bethesda, MD 20814

AGENDA

- Call To Order
- Presentation by EM Pooks Hill LLC, new owner of property next to the Pooks Hill Marriott Hotel; discussion of site plan modifications (45 minutes)
- Business Meeting
- Secretary's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Update on May 3, 2020 Spring Social Event
- Discussion on potential MCA action regarding 5212 Danbury Road
- Adjourn

MAPLEWOOD CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

On the coattails of a mild winter, Maplewood Citizens Association (MCA) is "swinging into spring." The MCA annual neighborhood spring social will be held on Sunday, May 3, 2020 at the Knights of Columbus on W. Cedar Lane. Please see page 2 for details.

At the May MCA neighborhood general meeting, new officers will be elected for 2020 – 2021. Barbara Harrison has, again, agreed to serve as Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee. Please submit nominations for the positions of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer to the Nominations Committee, MCA Post Office Box 2483, Kensington, Maryland 20891-2483 before May 9th or email Barbara at lakestargirl@gmail.com.

Land-use issues in Maplewood will be the subject of discussion at the next MCA neighborhood general meeting on

Wednesday, March 18, 2020. Please see below for related articles on the Beech Avenue property and the Pooks Hill Marriott property. In addition, MCA members will decide what action, if any, they would like MCA to take with respect to the home at 5212 Danbury Road (intersection with Jesup Lane). In September 2017, a fire killed a young man who was digging tunnels under the home at the request of the owner who is now in jail serving a 9-year sentence. See the article on page 4 for details.

As we all look forward to spring, I look forward to seeing you at the MCA neighborhood general meeting on March 18, 2020. Your input on the various issues is important.

Allen

WORMALD ACQUIRES VACANT PROPERTY ON BEECH AVENUE

MCA has learned that the vacant 5-acre property on Beech Avenue between Linden Avenue and Page Avenue has been sold to The Wormald Companies (Wormald). Wormald is expected to construct the 17 single-family homes in accordance with a site plan previously approved by Montgomery County Planning Board and has advertised that these homes will be available during summer 2020. Wormald has been invited to attend the May 20, 2020 MCA neighborhood general meeting to present its plans for the property and to respond to residents' questions and concerns.

Marriott Development Project Changes Ownership

In fall 2019, Quadrangle Corporation, the developer that had proposed to construct two high-rise apartment buildings on the Marriott surface parking lot on Pooks Hill Road (next to the Pooks Hill Marriott Hotel) decided to sell the property. EM Pooks Hill, LLC ("EM") has submitted a contract for the property. EM intends to request approval from the Planning Board to make some changes to Quadrangle's previously approved site plan which include reducing the height of the buildings and the number of units. EM has asked MCA for the opportunity to present its proposed changes to residents of Maplewood for comment and questions. This has been scheduled for the March 18, 2020 neighborhood general meeting. All residents are urged to attend as resident input is crucial as MCA prepares testimony about the site plan revisions for the Planning Board.



MAPLEWOOD OUR HOME

Needed:

Volunteers to join the Mapleleaf Newsletter delivery team in September, November, March and May.

Contact Barbara Harrison (lakestargirl@gmail.com)

French International School to Purchase FASEB Property

Just as this newsletter was going to press, MCA has learned that the French International School (FIS) intends to purchase in March 2020 the property owned by the Federation for The Advancement of Experimental Biology (FASEB) which is located at 9650 Rockville Pike just south of Pooks Hill Rd. Two years ago, FIS entered into agreement to purchase the property with plans to build a new elementary school to replace a Montgomery County Public School site it has been leasing in the Rollingwood section of Chevy Chase.

FIS must still obtain a Conditional Use Permit for the property and has been working with the Maryland State Highway Administration and Montgomery County agencies in this regard.

While FIS has informed MCA that it no longer intends to construct an entrance on Alta Vista Road, it is unclear if the existing entrance on Alta Vista Terrace will be utilized. FIS intends to have only buses come and go from the new school during peak hours of traffic. Finally, its proposal to lease an office building currently on the FASEB site is no longer part of the plan.

Any additional details on this matter will be presented at the March 18, 2020 Maplewood general meeting.

MAPLEWOOD CITIZENS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL SPRING FLING

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2020 1:00-4:00 p.m. Rock Creek Mansion

The Maplewood Citizens Association (MCA) is delighted to once again host its annual Spring Fling on Sunday, May 3, 2020, from 1:00 pm to 4:00 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Rock Creek Mansion at 5417 W. Cedar Lane.

Families will enjoy a moon-bounce for the little ones, a magician, a musician, a buffet of hamburgers, sausages with onions and bell peppers, salads and ice cream from Rock Hill Orchard & Woodbourne Creamery in Mt. Airy. It will be difficult to choose from the many different toppings! Bring lawn games as there is plenty of open grounds on which to play! Non-alcoholic beverages are included. A cash bar will be open for adult beverages.

The event is free for MCA dues paying members. Non-member fee is \$10.00 per person. You can join at the event for the \$25.00 annual MCA membership dues which is a great deal for families.

Please come & join your neighbors for an afternoon of relaxing comradery!

Should adverse weather affect the event, an announcement will be made on the Maplewood listserv. There is no rain date scheduled for the event.

This event is sponsored, in part, by The Knights of Columbus and The Estridge Group.

SAFETY MEASURES PLANNED FOR RT. 187/OLD GEORGETOWN RD BETWEEN JOHNSON AVENUE AND I-495

The Maryland Department of Transportation's State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) continues work on the MD 187/Old Georgetown Road from Johnson Avenue to I-495 on the Safety and Resurfacing Project. In addition to milling and paving, crews will replace damaged and deteriorated curb and gutter and clean drainage inlets and pipes. Crews will also install concrete bus pads on MD 187 at Wyngate Drive and Beech Avenue.

Further info is at <https://mdot-sha-md187-johnson-ave-to-i495-mo1575177-maryland.hub.arcgis.com/>

In December 2019, the MDOT SHA held a community walkthrough giving residents and concerned citizens an opportunity to tour a section of MD 187/Old Georgetown Road between W. Cedar Lane and I-495. Based upon community feedback received from walkthrough participants, MDOT SHA developed a pair of roadway improvement concepts to strengthen pedestrian and bicyclist safety in this corridor. The first proposed improvement, a "road diet" on MD 187, incorporates a dedicated bike lane with a 5-foot buffer. The second, lane narrowing on MD 187, proposes a 3-foot buffer for bicyclist who want to ride on the sidewalk.

Additional details are available at the above noted link, scrolling down to *Documents* and clicking on "(PDF) February Community Update".

MUSICAL TALENT EXTRAORDINAIRE

Will Joseloff, Sophomore at Walter Johnson High School

Violinist

Anyone who has heard Maplewood resident, Will Joseloff, play the violin knows that Will has a love of music, a dedication to hard work and an extraordinary talent that explains his incredible musical accomplishments although he is only 15 years old. The musical talents and support of Will's parents - Lynne (teaches flute and piano) and Larry (plays bass in several local bands) - have likely contributed to Will's achievements.

A member of the National Symphony Orchestra's Youth Fellowship Program, Will has also performed at the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage and Strathmore Music Center. On March 22, 2020 and May 31, 2020 Will is playing with the Maryland Classic Youth Orchestra at Strathmore Music Center.

Will took time to answer our questions:

1. How did you decide to play the violin and at what age did you begin taking it seriously?

When I was around the age of three, my parents would take me to orchestra concerts and after watching these concerts, I would beg my parents to let me play the violin until they got me one on my fourth birthday. I improved moderately throughout elementary school and middle school but when I got to high school, I realized that I wanted to pursue music and I worked harder and improved at a much faster rate.

2. Did music programs at elementary, middle or high school ever challenge you?

Since I have been involved with music as long as I can remember, fundamental music skills that were taught in school such as reading notes and rhythms didn't require much effort, but in middle school, I decided to sing in the chorus instead of orchestra and that provided a fun challenge since singing was new for me.

3. What were the steps in training?

When musicians start at an instrument for the first time, the only thing that they really strive for is making a nice sound and playing the right notes. When our technique is proficient, we can move into playing musically and developing interpretation which brings the music to life. However, even the best musicians practice all of these aspects including technique every single day.

4. Who do you think was key to your accomplishments and what role did they play?

My parents and teachers really have helped me in my musical endeavors by supporting me in a way that keeps me happy with playing music while also providing constructive criticism and encouraging hard work.

5. Where have you played/what have you achieved to date?

My greatest accomplishments have taken place in the past few years such as going on an orchestra tour in Italy during the summer of 2017, winning first place at the Brewster Memorial Competition in the spring of 2019, and getting into the National Symphony Orchestra's Youth Fellowship Program this school year. I have played in many orchestra performances at Strathmore Concert Hall along with solo and chamber concerts at the Kennedy Center.

6. Does your advanced education include music?

I am definitely planning on going into music and pursuing it as a career. I am starting to look at colleges and will go on a college visit to Rice University's amazing music school this spring. I'm also already preparing some repertoire for the arduous college auditions that I will take senior year.

7. What advice might you give to your peers who might be interested in music?

For anyone who plays music at any level, it is important to play music that you personally are passionate about because practicing your pieces and performing them should never feel like a chore. Of course, there will be aspects of practice that aren't the most fun like scales and arpeggios but overall, any musician should do whatever it takes to ensure that they love playing music.

WALTER JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL CREW CLUB FUNDRAISER



Here is a great opportunity for Maplewood residents interested in making their home evermore beautiful with annuals, herbs, and vegetables in 4" pots and full flats, hanging baskets, and porch pots.

The Walter Johnson High School Crew Club fundraiser will be held April 25-26 and May 9 at the high school, 6400 Rock Spring Dr, Bethesda. All proceeds will benefit the WJ Crew Club.

Preorder of baskets and porch pots is recommended and available at <https://sites.google.com/view/wjcrewplantsale2020/pre-order-form>.

Go Wildcats! Remember - Mother's Day is Sunday, May 10, 2020!

With close to 100 rowers, WJ Crew is one of the largest student sports groups at WJHS. The Club is open to all students, with no previous experience required and no cuts. As a club sport, it does not receive support from MCPS, the PTSA, or the WJHS Booster Club. This yearly plant sale fundraiser helps defray costs to keep the club running and enables all students to participate. The high-quality plants come from the supplier to American Plant.



YEAR 3 FOR ORGANIC CSA IN MAPLEWOOD

Bending Bridge Farm, an organic 12-acre farm in Ft. Loudon, PA, has a limited number of CSA (community supported agriculture) farmshares available **so sign up soon.**

The Maplewood pick up point is on Benton Avenue with Wednesday weekly deliveries beginning on May 27, 2020 for 24 weeks through early November 2020.

Bending Bridge Farm works with a network of family farms to offer a wide selection of certified organic and locally grown fruits and vegetable in addition to the organic produce grown at Bending Bridge Farm. This arrangement allows for farmshare members to customize each delivery or select a "farmer's choice" share consisting of 5-8 season items each week. With a farmshare paid in advance of the season, this CSA offers definite flexibility on produce selection and flexibility on what weeks delivery is desired.

Farmshare members from previous years have been so enthusiastic about the produce and the occasional opportunity to try a new vegetable. The weekly box is a novel way to get children to learn more about where their food comes from and to learn about the importance of how food is grown (with regenerative techniques in order to insure healthy soil). Healthy soil produces healthy, nutrient dense food which leads to healthier people.

For more information and to sign up, please visit <https://www.bendingbridgefarm.com> and click on "Farmshare 2020".

TUNNELS... WHERE DO THEY GO? ARE ADJOINING PROPERTIES SAFE?

5212 DANBURY RD AT JESUP LANE

Homeowner, David Beckwitt, is currently serving a 9- year jail term having been convicted (criminal court case) in 2019 for the death, in September 2017, of a young man he had hired to dig tunnels under his home at 5212 Danbury Rd. The young man was working in the tunnels when a fire broke out. Beckwitt managed to escape.

Although Montgomery County has never explored the tunnels under the home, County inspectors determined the house to be structurally unsound and ordered Beckwitt to have it torn down. Beckwitt is suing Montgomery County over that decision (civil court case). The Montgomery County States Attorney ordered that the civil trial be held in abeyance until the criminal case was resolved which occurred in the summer 2019 with the conviction.

Shortly after the criminal case was resolved, residents in the vicinity of the fire-damaged house received a letter from Beckwitt's attorney stating that Beckwitt was going to have an assessment of the damage and conduct remediation work in September 2019. Neighbors have not received further correspondence and it is unclear what, if any, assessment/remediation has been performed by the County or Beckwitt other than boarding up the windows and an outside clean up.

Allen Myers, MCA president, has made numerous attempts to obtain information on the house from both Beckwitt's attorney (who has not responded) and from various Montgomery County departments (Department of Permitting Services, County Executive's office, etc) which finally resulted in a call from the Barry Hudson, the County's Chief Information Officer (CIO). Hudson agreed to submit a list of MCA questions to the County attorney and indicated a County representative would attend the March 18, 2020 MCA neighborhood general meeting (Note: Subsequent efforts to confirm the County representative would attend have been met with silence). Hudson indicated that the civil case proceeding proscribed him from providing much additional information other than the following which Hudson wrote in an email to the MCA president: "the lawsuit is pending in the Circuit Court for Montgomery County and is subject to a Scheduling Order. Under the Scheduling Order, a settlement/pre-trial hearing is scheduled for the end of May 2020. Typically, a trial date will be set between 90-120 days from the settlement/pre-trial hearing. At trial, the County will request an Abatement Order which will be used to require the property owner to remediate the condition of the property according to a court-imposed schedule, regardless of whether the homeowner is incarcerated. In the meantime, the homeowner has assembled a team and is voluntarily assessing the condition of the property and formulating a remediation plan. The team, which includes a civil engineer, geotechnical engineers, land surveyor, industrial hygienist, and arborist, reports that the condition of the house is stable. The homeowner's arborist has recommended that 3 internal trees be removed but doesn't believe that the trees and shrubs on the property present an immediate safety hazard."

MCA is concerned about the a) safety of nearby homes; b) lack of answers to above noted questions; c) discrepancies within various County departments on the actual property condition and lack of the County's official investigation of the tunnels; d) County reliance on Beckwitt (owner) to have property assessed for safety and to let him develop a remediation plan of his own property; e) CIO Hudson's lack of response to confirm a County representative will attend the March 18, 2020 MCA general meeting.

Accordingly, MCA will have a discussion at the March 18, 2020 MCA general meeting (7:30pm) to discuss what steps, if any, MCA should consider taking on this issue.

The Maplewood Citizens Association has been around for more than half a century. It provides a public forum to discuss neighborhood concerns, solve problems, and promote community.

Make Maplewood a better place to live – become a member or renew your membership today!

MEMBERSHIP FORM — Maplewood Citizens Association (MCA)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

CHECK ONE: New Member _____ Renewal _____

Today's Date _____

Dues are \$25 for one year, September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2020 payable by check to "MCA". Please send your completed membership form and check to: Alan Goldhammer, Treasurer, MCA, P.O. Box 2483, Kensington, MD 20891-2483 OR through PayPal at maplewoodcitizens.org .